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Mandalay

AND OTHER CITIES OF THE PAST IN BURMA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE SILKEN EAST: A Record of Life and Travel in Burma. In 2 vols.

(Royal Octavo)

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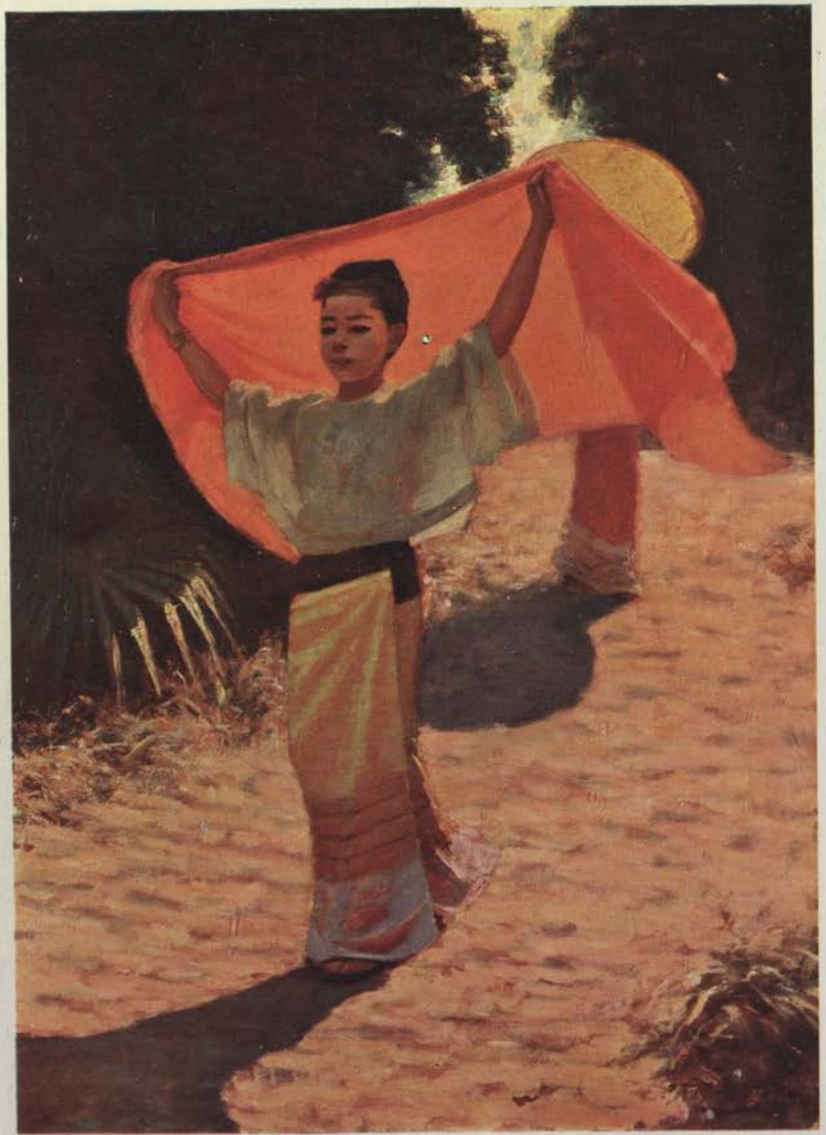

From a painting by J. R. Middleton.

AN EXTEMPORISED PARASOL.

MANDALAY

AND OTHER CITIES OF THE PAST IN BURMA

56894

BY

V. C. SCOTT O'CONNOR

Author of "The Silken East"

GREAT GATE OF MANDALAY

WITH 235 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND 8 COLOURED PLATES AFTER PAINTINGS BY MR. J. R. MIDDLETON AND SAYA CHONE; TOGETHER WITH A PLAN OF THE PALACE OF MANDALAY BY AN EX-MINISTER OF THE KING OF BURMA, AND 6 OTHER MAPS AND PLANS

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To

LORD CURZON

OF

KEDLESTON

Whose great
and affectionate care
has given new life
to the
fading monuments of India,
this book is,
with his permission,
respectfully inscribed

PREFACE

IN *The Silken East*, I sought to present a life-like picture of Burma and its people. I was concerned there only with the things that had daily passed before my own eyes. But the Past holds the secret of the Present in its hands. In this volume, therefore, I aim at a resuscitation of the Past of Burma as it finds expression in its cities, the centres of a bygone day. So much only of the living impression of the hour is given as is necessary to the completion of the story.

All countries that have a history reaching back over many centuries contain more than one city or ruin which at some time filled the place of a capital. But in Burma these past capitals are unusually numerous. Their number is partly to be ascribed to the internal conflicts which left, now one of its three leading races triumphant, now another. The Burmese, the Môn, and the Shan fought for supremacy for two thousand years, and the history of Burma is but the record of their conflicts, punctuated by invasion from without. Thatôn and Pegu thus stand for the Môn people; Prome, Pagân, Mandalay, Amarapura for the Burmese stock;

Sagaing and Ava, in their beginnings, for the Shan. Tagoung reaches back to the early start of Burmese civilisation under the influence of Northern India; its destruction, like that of Pagān, was due to invasion from China.

But the migration of the capitals of Burma is not wholly due to these causes. Instinctive forces, racial and spiritual, have contributed to the same end. The Mongoloid hordes have retained, in spite of time and settling influences, some of the restless spirit that first sent them wandering over the world. The Buddhist religion has grafted upon this instinct the disregard of merely material things; and it is the simple truth that nearly every man and woman in Burma to this day is vastly more concerned with storing up spiritual merit than the good things of this world. Hence it has come that even at the height of its power and glory, and under the greatest of its kings, the nation has arrived at permanence only in its sacred edifices. The walls of its old cities alone challenge with the numberless Pagodas of Burma the memory of its past. The last of the Alompra Kings lived, as their predecessors two thousand years before them, in a temporary, if superb, palace of wood; and the better part of their wealth, like that of all who came before them, went to the construction of permanent buildings in stone and brick, intended for devotional purposes alone. Thus it has been possible for Emperor after Emperor to move his capital, at the

bidding of his own will, but with the concurrence —if reluctant—of his people.

The reader whose patience may outlast the perusal of these pages will find that he has visited nearly all the principal centres of life in the Burma of the past, and that he has brought away with him a consecutive impression of the history of the country. At Mergui in particular he will touch upon a remarkable episode. For if it has no claim to rank amongst the past capitals of the land, it came wonderfully near to greatness. It all but rose to be a capital of the English race in the Far East two hundred years ago, and had James II. known how to retain it, the later history of Burma would have been otherwise written, and Mandalay itself might never have come into being.

In reading of mediæval Pegu the reader should remember that he is concerned with a state of society which till little more than half a century ago had survived almost without a change. Indeed, on visiting Burma, he will be astonished to find how little in many respects it has changed even yet. But vast and profound transformations are now afoot in Burma, as in other parts of Asia, and soon these old mediæval narratives, from which I have so liberally quoted, will fall back into the category to which they belong—the category of *Hakluyt* and of *Purchas, his Pilgrimes.*

Meanwhile in Burma, as in India, great efforts are now being made to preserve all that the past has left us in

these historic lands; and in writing this book I have been glad to avail myself of the most recent publications and of some of the photographs of the Archæological Department of the Government of India. I am indebted to Mr. Marshall (the Director-General of the Department), and to Mr. Taw-Sein-Ko, his accomplished assistant in Burma, for the kindness they have done me in placing these at my disposal and in looking through the proof-sheets of this book.

Since returning to England I am more than ever impressed with the wonderful indifference of the British public to all that lies outside of England. It is a strange phenomenon in an imperial race, this unconsciousness. If there be any justification then for my books, it will perhaps be found in the purpose I have had at heart, of making the things I know about, however slightly, better understood of those with whom I share this marvellous heritage.

O'C.

Authors' Club,
Whitehall Court, S.W.
August 1, 1907.

N.B.—*Each chapter in this book stands by itself, but the reader who desires to peruse its pages in chronological sequence should take them in the following order: Thatôn, Tagoung, Thare-kettaya, Prome, Pegu, Pagân, Ava, Sagaing, Mergui, Amarapura, Mandalay.*

Further information on the subjects treated here will be found in the "Upper Burma Gazetteer," Sir A. Phayre's "History of Burma," Anderson's "English Intercourse with Siam," and the Narratives of the three Envoys—Symes, Crawfurd, and Yule.

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BOOK I

The Alompra Cities

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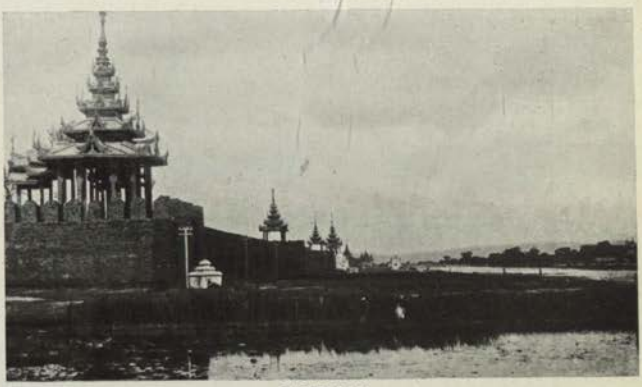


MANDALAY

MANDALAY

CHAPTER I

MANDALAY

I. THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

The King

OF all the old capitals of Burma, whose remains, scattered over a thousand miles from Tagaung to Tenasserim, bear testimony to its history, Mandalay is the newest. And yet its atmosphere is altogether of the past. It stands to-day for a dynasty that is no more, for a Court whose splendour and whose etiquette are already fading into oblivion, for a sentiment that has all but ceased to exist.

At Rangoon the imagination strains forward into years that are yet to come, for some hint of the great Destiny that awaits it; at Mandalay one only wonders how much longer its crenellated walls and crumbling battlements will survive; how much longer its gilded pillars and tapering spires will speak to the eye of things that can never live again.

Already the keen, pressing spirit of Rangoon is impatient of the faint rivalry of its once royal neighbour, and the efforts of a Viceroy to retain with care, and at

some little expense, a fraction of its past splendour are treated with scorn in the lower city.

"Sweep it away," say the business people, "and let us have done with Mandalay and its tawdry glories; we want money for better things." And so in a little while Mandalay—the King's city—must go.

Yet fifty years ago it had not so much as come into existence. Any one who will turn to the narrative of Sir Henry Yule, written in 1855, will find no mention of it, nor in the blank space under Mandalay Hill, in his beautiful little map of the old capital, any symptom of a coming city.

The story of the origin of Mandalay is quickly told. In 1853 King Mindon Min ascended the throne of Burma. In 1856 he grew very tired of his capital (Amarapura), associated in his mind with the unfortunate reign of his elder brother, and the humiliation of his country. He was anxious to make a better beginning, he was avid of fame, and he wished to draw away the attention of his people from the disasters that had overtaken his dynasty.

He began accordingly to dream dreams, to see visions, and to consult with his wise men and his soothsayers about the founding of a new city. In all this he was only living up to the traditions of his race; and the hereditary temptation to migrate to a new capital must by this time have become almost irresistible.

In the East—the old-fashioned East—half measures are not held of much account. To the man in power, to the troublesome person of strong will, all men give way, suffering him to rule or to misrule to an extent that is almost incredible; until he has been endured enough, and

After a sketch by Sir Henry Yule.

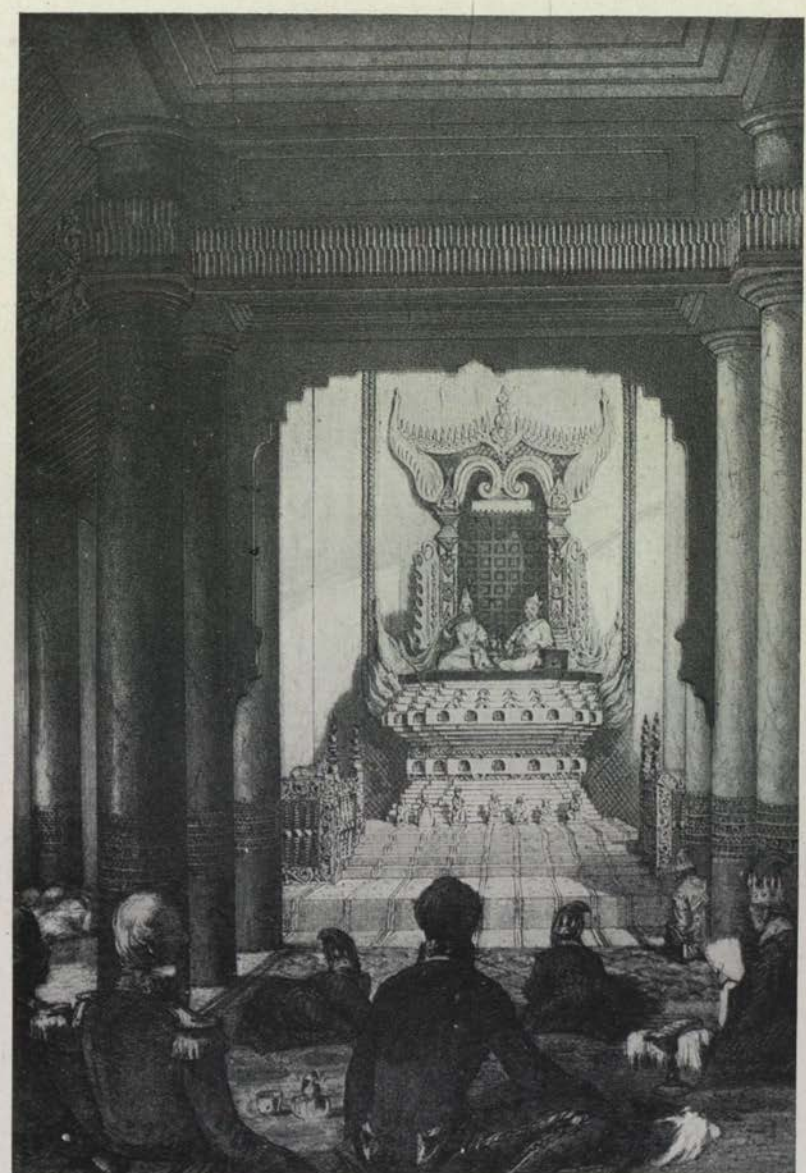
KING MINDON MIN

then—and then—they cut his throat, and throw him down to the dogs—if they can.

And so it came that on Friday the 13th of February, 1857, that year of terrible upheaval in India, the first stone of Mandalay was laid to please the King, and a hundred and fifty thousand people prepared to give up their homes and all their associations, and move to a bare new city, at the caprice of his will.

Five great officers of state were chosen by the King to supervise the construction of the new city. It was to be a perfect square of 6,666 feet; the walls were to attain a height of 18 cubits; at intervals of 555 feet there were to be turrets for watchmen with gold-tipped spires; and there were to be twelve gates, of which the four principal ones were to bear away from the palace to the cardinal points. The greatest care was taken to follow the traditional plan of the older capitals of the country; and it is in this perpetuation of an ancient tradition that the true architectural interest of Mandalay resides.

Upon one point there is some dispute. The practice of all previous kings had been to bury alive a number of persons at the founding of a new city, and lively fears were entertained at Amarapura when the foundations of the new city were being laid. We have it upon the authority of the King, that this ancient custom was not followed at Mandalay. Jars of oil were buried instead at the corners of the city, and guardian spirits were installed in little image houses under the care of inspired mediums. The King would have no victims associated with the outset of his reign of peace; yet a



After a sketch by Sir Henry Yule.

RECEPTION OF THE BRITISH ENVOY BY KING MINDON.

few years were to see his palace held up to execration as a slaughter-house, and his benevolent purpose set aside by his successor. A moat, 225 feet wide, was dug about the walls with a strip of green grass land between, and the old palace at Amarapura was bodily transferred to Mandalay. The great gilded columns, the fine carving, and the royal thrones that are the best feature of Mandalay, are relics of the older city. The palace itself was protected, as apart from the great battlemented walls, by a stockade of teak posts 20 feet high, and an inner brick wall 15 feet high, with an esplanade 60 feet wide between. Few signs of these now survive.

In June 1857 the King and all his Court moved in splendid procession to Mandalay. There the King established himself in a temporary palace, and personally overlooked the completion of the city and the allotting of sites for public purposes. The Court was followed by the clergy. "The Thathana-baing, Sayadaws, and Pôngyis, to the number of about five hundred, marched in great procession, with the images of Gautama and the Pitakas, from Amarapura to Mandalay. The images and Pitakas (the Buddhist scriptures) were placed on platforms and carried on the shoulders of men, the images under the shade of eight golden umbrellas, the Pitakas under the shadow of six. The chief Sadaw had four white umbrellas, and each of the five hundred rahans two. The King and Queen, the Royal Mother, the Heir-apparent, and all the Princes and Ministers received them at the Ywe-daw-yu Gate." When the new palace was finished, the King and Queen went to it in royal procession and entered in.

THIBAW

Here in the heart of his new city and out of sight and sound of the British steamers, which fretted his spirit, Mindon Min, one of the best kings whom Burma has known, lived and ruled for more than twenty years. His policy was one of kindliness and peace; he cherished an earnest desire to live at friendship with his powerful neighbour, already in possession of more than half the empire of his forefathers; and had he been followed by successors as intelligent and as pacific as he was himself, his country might have retained at least a partial independence for many generations, and his people the social nucleus that clothes the dry bones of progress with life and colour. But King Mindon was followed by a lad without character, of doubtful birth and yet more doubtful courage, and the destinies of the country fell a prey to the intrigues of women, clever enough to

manœuvre within the walls of a palace, but utterly ignorant of the great world without. The Burmese Court was weak, the Burmese temper was proud to the extremity of arrogance, and rather than submit to any dictation at the hands of Great Britain, it was prepared to play the hazardous game of an active alliance with another European power.

To such a policy, in the circumstances of the time, there could be only one conclusion, and that conclusion was reached on the 28th of November, 1885, but seven years after the death of Mindon Min, when his successor, King Thibaw, gave himself up as a prisoner to the British army and Burma as a sovereignty ceased to exist. The history of these events, crowded with human and dramatic interest, is still fresh in the memory of the world, still fresh upon the lips of those who took a part in them; it has been written by more than one chronicler, and I do not purpose to relate it here at any length. Yet some account of the final *débâcle* is necessary to any description of Mandalay as an historic city.

II. THE DEATH OF KING MINDON

In July 1878 King Mindon, then in the sixty-fifth year of his life and the twenty-sixth of a reign of unusual prosperity, lay ill in his palace at Mandalay. He was, as the age of kings is reckoned, an old man, the father of seventy children, many of whom were now princes of mature age and determined character; there was no Heir-apparent, for primogeniture does not easily prevail with kings who marry many wives, and the King to the last abstained from indicating a successor.

Grave issues were therefore involved in the question of the King's health. Should he die, it was certain that a struggle for the throne would take place among his sons. In this struggle many lives would be taken, disorder would ensue, the country would be plunged in the agonies of civil war. All these things had happened before in Burmese history. But it was unlikely that they would be suffered, without interruption, to occur again; for across the border there lay a province of the British Empire, and the British Empire was tired of the vanities and pretensions of the Burmese Court. It wished to make clear its suzerainty over the kingdom of Burma; it wished to brush away the etiquette of indignity to which its representatives had been subjected for a hundred years. It was unlikely to countenance the atrocities certain to be associated with Burmese civil war, or to endure the disorganisation of its trade that would accompany disorder in Upper Burma. Moreover there was a small but loud-voiced party within it, not altogether free of cant, which clamoured in any event for "Annexation." From all these causes the issue of the King's illness was awaited with acute anxiety; amongst others by a handful of Englishmen at the royal capital, whose very existence was likely to depend on the turn that events might take.

One of them, writing early in September 1878, gives a graphic account of the situation. "I am expecting and watching," he says, "for the arrival of refugee princes escaping from an expected massacre. We do not know whether the King is alive or dead, and expect to hear a wild outburst of confusion every moment." But the King, though dying, was not yet dead. To calm the fears of

his people he made an heroic effort, and, climbing up the steps to his throne, he appeared before them. It was the last effort of a man who had deserved well of his country. He returned to his chamber, never to leave it alive.

As his strength waned, the intrigues of those within the palace, to whom above all others he might have looked for loyalty, grew and took sinister form. The Alé-nan-daw, or Queen of the Middle Palace, who, since the death of the chief queen, had taken the leading place in his affections and in the domination of the palace, was determined to secure the succession for Thibaw, a junior son of the King. She knew him to be a weak man, and she knew him to be deeply in love with her daughter Supaya-lat. These were sufficient qualifications in her eyes for the claimant to a throne. But Thibaw, whose legitimacy was doubtful, had no following of his own; the sentiment of the country was not likely to be in his favour; and the King had shown no intention of nominating him as his successor, in preference to his other and more deserving sons.

The course the Queen took was to win over to her side the leading Ministers of the King. To these good people, of whom the chief was the Kinwun Min-gyi, it seemed a comfortable arrangement that Thibaw should succeed to the throne. In the course of their travels in Europe they had picked up ideas on the subject of constitutional government, and they had learnt that constitutional government makes most progress under a weak sovereign. The weakness of Thibaw was, in their eyes also, his greatest virtue.

The Queen having thus won over the Ministers, it

only remained to secure by some signal act of treachery the persons of all the rival candidates to the throne. They were summoned accordingly, on the 12th of September, 1878, to visit the King in his chamber. Believing the order to emanate from him, they came. Immediately on entering the palace they were seized and thrown into prison. Two only, the Nyaung-yan and the Nyaung-ôk Princes, who with more discretion abstained, took refuge in the British Residency.

SUPAYA-LAT

"A lady of the palace," writes the Rev. James Colbeck, who was instrumental in their escape, "came to me dressed as a bazaar woman, and shortly after came about a dozen others. I had to take them in and secrete them as well as possible. A few minutes after them came in a common coolie, as I thought.

"I got up and said, 'Who are you?'

"He said, 'I am Prince Nyaung-yan, save me!'

"He was terribly agitated, had escaped from a house in which he was confined, and his uncle had been cut down—not killed—in opening a way for the Prince to escape."

"So soon as dusk came," Mr. Colbeck adds, "we dressed up our prince as a Tamil servant and smuggled him into the Residency compound, right under the noses of the Burmese guard at the gate. He carried a lamp and held an umbrella over me, as it was raining, and I spoke to him as a servant until the coast was clear."

It was of this service that the Prince expressed his appreciation in terms that cannot surely be surpassed in the language of gratitude. "The life," he said, "that I got from my father and mother I lost on that day; the life that I am now living is the life that you have given me."

But the King still lingered, and the cries of his children could still reach his ears. It came to his knowledge that they were lying in prison and in imminent peril of their lives. He commanded that they should be instantly released and admitted to his presence. And now at last, within a few days of his death, he made a faint effort to face the future of his house.

It was a weak effort, the effort of a perplexed and dying man. He decided that his three eldest sons should divide the country between them as regents, and that the minor princes, their brothers and half-brothers, should follow whom they would. A more destructive policy could scarcely have been formulated. It made civil war a certainty, and the Ministers upon whom the anxiety of government was about to devolve were resolved that it should not be carried into effect.

THIBAW IN COURT DRESS

No sooner had the princes left the palace than they were attacked by a body of soldiery, taken prisoners, and again thrown into custody, from which they were never again to emerge alive. Twelve days later the King died. His body lay in state in the Hman-nan-daw or Crystal Palace, and the world was invited to come and gaze upon it. "We came," wrote an English visitor, "to the Presence Chamber, a large, lofty, darkened room, in which the King's body was lying on a kind of couch. Two princesses knelt near the body, fanning it, and at the foot of the couch were a large number of queens, princesses, and maids-of-honour; all were kneeling and very quiet, and dressed completely in white, as also was the body. It was quite natural and fresh, so that death could not have taken place more than two days before."

We may pause here to consider the character and personality of King Mindon. He came to the throne when his country was distracted by the disastrous war his brother had waged with Great Britain. The richest province of the old Burmese Empire had been wrested from him by the imperious and masterful Dalhousie; his palace had been desecrated by the appalling barbarities of his insane father, King Tharawadi, of whom it is written that he rejoiced in shooting innocent persons with his fowling-piece for an afternoon's amusement and offering up their livers to the tutelary Nats; and by his brother, whose rapacity led him, without the excuse of insanity, to even worse actions; his future lay at the mercy of his British neighbours, who had but to stretch out their hands to pull him from the throne. Yet he

lived on terms of friendliness with them, he abstained to the end of his life from the shedding of other men's blood, and as far as in him lay he restored to the meagre remnant of his country such prosperity as it was capable of under a Burmese régime. To his humanity many have borne testimony. The Rev. Dr. Marks, to whom he showed much kindness, has testified that during the five years of his residence in the Burmese capital there was not a single public execution. In 1869 a man, by name U Po, was really executed and afterwards impaled for an offence against Buddhism. "Sir John Lawrence upon hearing of it conveyed to the King an expression of his regret and abhorrence. The King felt the rebuke very keenly, and in private conversation with me often alluded to the subject." He was humane and pious, and upon occasion carried his magnanimity to an unusual point. There is an old story, which touches the limits of comedy, of his parting with the Magwé Queen, who came before him and begged to be allowed to marry a man after her own heart. He was a common trader on the Irrawaddy, a man of the people whom she had known and loved as a girl.

The King, to the astonishment of the Court, gave his willing consent. "I have," he said, "given many things away, titles and money and lands. It has been left to the Magwé Queen to show me a new and unexpected road to benevolence. I consent. Let her go to the man she prefers." At the evening Council he addressed her father by adoption, the Myowun of Mandalay. "You are her father," he said; "it is fitting that you should share with me the merit I earn by giving her up to my rival."

The Myowun took a less lenient view. To his mind the queen was guilty of conduct as foolish as it was treasonable. "Your Majesty," he said, "she deserves to die. You have but to authorise me and I will kill her with my own hand."

But the King held to his word, and his romantic partner was suffered to live in peace. It is open to the cynic to suggest that the lady was forty, and that King Mindon, who had many wives, suffered no great loss in parting with one; yet the episode is illustrative of his good-nature and benevolent purpose. Of his desire to live at peace with his British neighbours he gave many proofs. He could never bring himself to formally acknowledge the annexation of Pegu; he would sign no treaty. Once a king of Burma had fled before a Chinese invasion. He is known to this day by the soubriquet of "The king who ran away from the Chinese." The Burmese are happy in their nomenclature, and Mindon dreaded going down in the history of his country as "He who signed away Pegu." Pressed repeatedly by the British Envoy, advised even by his Ministers to give way, he was not to be moved. "It behoves me," he explained to a confidential friend, "to be more cautious than any one in an affair of this importance. *I am responsible for the honour of the kingdom.*" But short of this he showed an almost touching desire to live upon terms of amity. He received the British embassies with a frank consideration unknown previously at the Court of Burma. His talk upon these occasions was ever of the evils which spring from misunderstanding, of the benefits of friendliness and neighbourly goodwill. And as far as in him lay he lived up to these sentiments.

KING MINDON'S TOMB

He was vain of his learning, of his Buddhist piety. In his dialogues with the British envoys he loved to air his knowledge of the sacred books and of the weaknesses of human nature. Probably no single circumstance in the whole of his worthy, peaceful life gave him greater satisfaction than the title of "Convenor of the Fifth Great Synod," which accrued to him as a devout patron of the Buddhist Church, the spiritual successor of Asoka. Of his kindness to his wives, his children, his dependants, there is abundant evidence.

The loss of his finest provinces drove him to ingenious devices for replenishing the royal exchequer. He embarked upon a system of State monopolies and became the greatest trader in his kingdom. In the management of these, and in his dealings with his Ministers and others about him, he showed much natural shrewdness and ability. All in all, he was as good a man and as wise a sovereign as the Burmese civilisation of his time could produce, and the record of his life is pleasant to look back upon in the somewhat gloomy annals of his country. His good intentions, his desire for amity and peace, his hopes for the welfare of his children, were not destined to be realised. His reign marks but a brief interlude between successive waves of disaster, and within seven years of his death, his dynasty was extinguished and his kingdom removed from the category of independent nations.

III. THE MASSACRE

The day after the funeral of Mindon Min, Thibaw was proclaimed King. Within five months, led by the

women who ruled him, he came to the conclusion that the best course he could take with his brothers and sisters was to murder them.

"A huge trench was dug to receive them all, and many were tossed in half alive or only stunned by the clubs of the executioners. The Hléthin Atwinwun was Myowun of Mandalay at the time, and he with the Yanaung Mintha and their Letthondaws—their personal attendants—was sent to verify the dragonnade and see that none escaped. The huge grave was covered with earth, which was trampled down by the feet of the executioners; but after a day or two it began gradually to rise, and the King sent all the palace elephants to trample it level again. After some time the trench was opened and the bodies were taken out and removed to the common burial ground and interred there."—*(Burmese Chronicle).*

THE CHIEF EUNUCH

This massacre is said to have shocked the sentiment of the country. It may have done so, but to one who has talked about it to many Burmans, to women who were maids-of-honour in the King's days, to officials of the present régime, and to private persons, there has appeared no discoverable trace of horror at the King's cruelty, in their remarks upon the subject. The general sentiment in Burma is that the massacre of the princes was a political necessity; painful and unfortunate perhaps, but inevitable, and warranted by a hundred precedents. And at least one of the murdered princes, the Metkaya Prince, is reputed to have taken this view of the matter. Addressing his half-brother, the Thonzé Prince, who begged earnestly for life, he said:

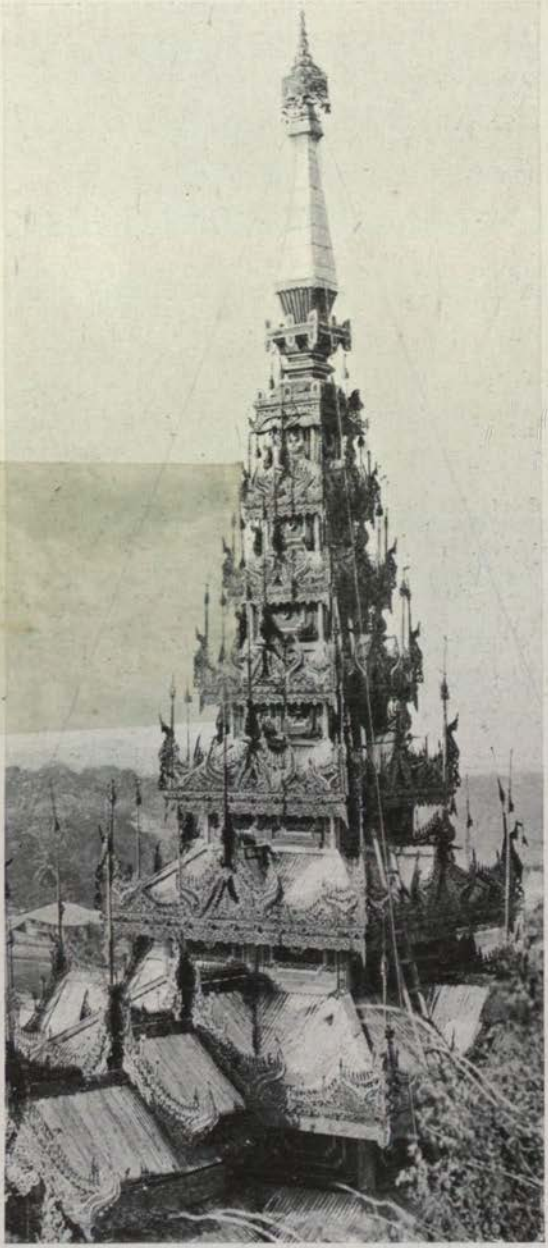
"My brother, it is not becoming to beg for life; we must die, for it is the custom. Had you been made King you would have given the same order."

The massacre accomplished, there followed several years of misrule, and each day as it went by made clearer the weakness and incompetency of the King. Within the palace a tragi-comedy was enacted, the key-note of which was the Queen's jealousy, and her determination to let no other woman hold sway over her husband. Details of the inner life of the Court during this period are not lacking. Domestic minutiæ with a flavour of romance especially commend themselves to the Burmese annalist, and there is tolerably complete record of the phases of this conflict between the passionate lady who at the outset appears to have loved the King, and that weak personage, whose every act was consistent with the psychology of his character. In

Mandalay and along the banks of the Irrawaddy, curious tales may still be heard by the traveller of the intrigues and jealousies of Thibaw's Court, and the stormy passages that followed every attempt on his part to break away from the restrictions imposed upon him by his wife.

The King, by the laws and by the traditions of his country, was entitled to the love of as many women as his heart might hanker after, and every precedent required that he should, as a matter of propriety, have at the least four queens. He began by marrying two, Supaya-lat and her sister Supaya-gyi; and the latter, as the elder sister, was nominated chief queen. It was Supaya-lat's first care to oust her sister, and prevent her being the King's wife in anything more than name. This she accomplished without difficulty, for the lady had few attractions. Of an evening one may still hear in Sagaing, that charming tamarind-sheltered retreat across the Irrawaddy, how the nurse and confidante of Supaya-gyi was slowly starved to death there in prison, under the orders of Supaya-lat.

A more difficult task lay in the Queen's way when Thibaw's fancy fell upon a pretty creature named Me-kin-gyi, the grand-daughter of one of his great officers of state, and the maid-of-honour whose duty it was to attend his infant child by Supaya-lat. The story has been told more than once, and it must suffice here to say that Me-kin-gyi fell a victim to the hatred of her rival and the weakness of the King, her lover. There is perhaps no incident in the career of King Thibaw which reflects more dishonour upon him than this one. It shows him a weakling, and it has greatly alienated



THE MONASTERY SPIRE

from him the sympathy of many who regret the misfortunes that led to the extinction of his dynasty and his throne. The Queen's ascendency over her husband was now fully established, and up to the last, by virtue of her stronger will and more resolute character, she played a leading part in the councils of the State.

Without the palace, the King's power steadily decayed. Dacoit bands ravaged the country to within a few miles of Mandalay; bands of Chinese adventurers took possession of Bhamo; the revenues no

THE SPIRE OF THE PALACE

longer came in with the comparative regularity of his father's reign. From time to time his treasury was empty. The political relations of Burma with England were in worse case. Within a year of King Thibaw's accession the British representative withdrew from his Court.

A mission to the Viceroy projected by the Burmese Court in 1880 was not suffered to proceed beyond Thayetmyo on the British frontier, as it was held "incongruous and premature to send a complimentary mission to Calcutta or to assume, as the King did, that the mission could be received in a friendly and honourable manner, in Calcutta, by the Government of India, whose representative had been treated with habitual discourtesy in Mandalay." The Burmese Court had, in point of fact, no genuine desire for the friendship of Great Britain. It was too proud and too weak to make the concessions that could alone serve as a basis of conciliation. Its own resources were too slender to sustain its great pretensions. In these circumstances one dangerous alternative alone remained, and to that alternative it turned with a feverish haste. It determined to throw itself into the arms of France.

The issue was now clear, and from the British point of view, at any rate, there could be but one desirable conclusion. The presence of a powerful European rival on our frontiers, dominating the trade of the Irrawaddy and all the interior country between China and Burma on the one hand, and India and Burma on the other, could only end in grave complications in the future. King Thibaw was therefore informed that he must be prepared to submit his foreign relations to the control of Great Britain. The result was war.

From a painting by Saya Chone.

THE ABDICATION OF KING THIBAW.

King Thibaw surrendering to Sir Harry Prendergast and Sir Douglas Sladen in a Summer House in the Palace Gardens.

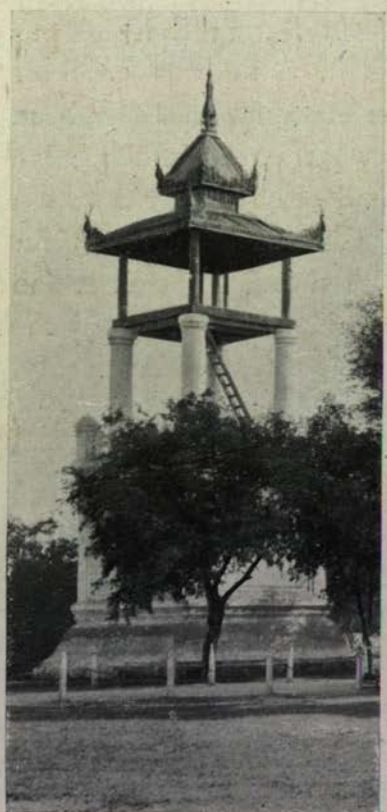
On the 4th of November, 1885, the British army crossed the frontier. On the 3rd of December King Thibaw was a prisoner on his way to a long exile, which still continues. To the last he displayed the vacillation, the character, of a weak and timid man.

Of King Thibaw, men say in Burma that he was weak and incompetent; but not that he was cruel or vicious. He is believed on the contrary to have been good-natured, kindly, and somewhat of a scholar. He was brought up in a monastery, and attended for a season the school of Dr. Marks, the Christian missionary for whom his father, King Mindon, had built a church and a school-house. At the age of nineteen he passed the Patama-byan Examination of learned divines. At twenty, ignorant of the world, he ascended a difficult throne, at a difficult period in his country's history. Nature had given him an ample figure and a good-looking face. She omitted to provide him with the character that could alone have borne him safely over the difficult seas on which he was embarked.

Of Supaya-lat it is said that she was jealous to the verge of madness, and it is probable that with the Alompra forehead she inherited some portion of the insanity which undoubtedly characterised her family. She was a handsome girl, with bright sparkling eyes, when she married King Thibaw, and in spite of all her failings she had a charm of manner which fascinated her maids-of-honour and all to whom she wished to be kind. Her temper was passionate and resentful to the last degree, and if there be some who doubt whether she could love, there are none who doubt that she could hate. She

carried herself with great dignity; and I have been told by those who knew her that her presence was quite unlike that of the ordinary Burmese lady.

She felt acutely the downfall of her country, and cried when she walked on to the steamer that was to bear her away into exile. In spite of the grave blemishes on her character, there was that about Supaya-lat which lifts her into a higher place than her husband; some quality of race perhaps, for she was of royal blood on both sides, whereas he, it is said, was not royal at all; or maybe it was only the greater fire and passion that animated her. It seems natural to speak of her and of King Thibaw in the past, as it does of all that appertains to the throne of Burma. They still live, but, as it were, in some grey backwater of Time, and the tales one hears at intervals of King Thibaw sulking at Ratnagheri and of Queen Supaya-lat demanding in shrill tones, from the unhappy officer in whose charge they live, an addition to their somewhat limited allowance, are too painful to be dwelt upon.



THE BAHOSIN

MIDSUMMER ON THE MOAT

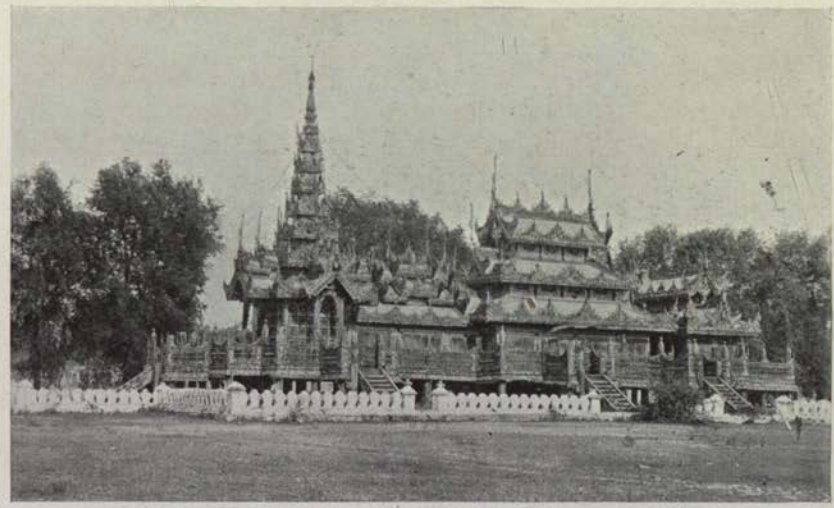
IV. THE CITY

From his throne in the Great Hall of Audience, the King of Burma as he looked down upon his assembled

THE SWÉDAW-ZIN

people could see the long white road which leads like an arrow to the East gate, and out beyond, towards the blue Shan Mountains and the rising sun. I would take this road to-day for what it has to offer.

Most prominent of all, there rise a little way off, on either hand, the Bahosin and the Swédaw-zin, the old Clock Tower, and the Relic House which holds a *pseudo* tooth of Gautama presented to the King by the Buddhist fraternity of Ceylon. The former is a square three-storied building, picturesque, like nearly everything that is Burmese. The first part of it is of solid white masonry, and it is only by getting close up to its northern face that one discovers



MONASTERY IN WHICH KING THIBAW PASSED HIS NOVITIATE

the narrow stairs within that lead to the platform above. A wooden ladder mounts from this to the next floor, which is of wood, and over all there is a wooden roof whose carving and gilding are the worse for wear and neglect. Save for the four pillars which sustain the upper floor and the roof, all above the masonry base is open to the air. Here the water-clock filled from hour to hour, and the big drum beaten, sent its vibrant music through the palace precincts and out into the highways beyond. Its strokes

were linked in some mysterious way with the sun and moon and the twenty-seven constellations, and the four great elements of which the world is composed.

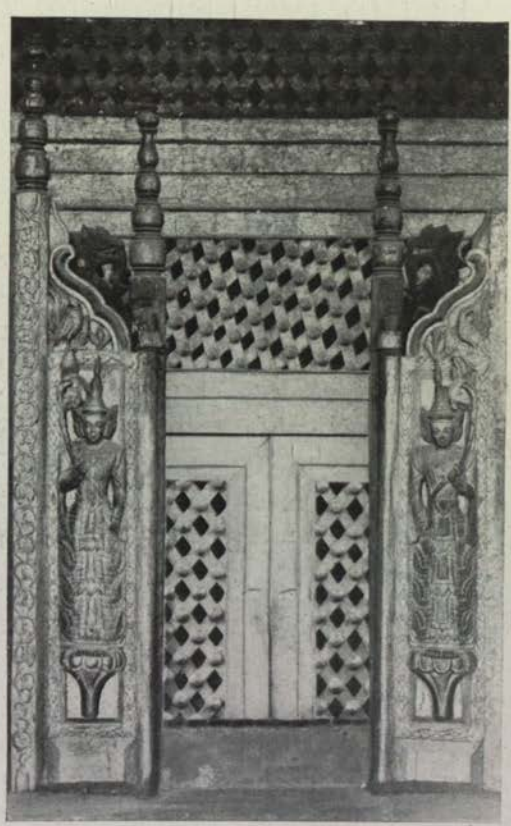
But of what consequence, one wonders, was Time to a Buddhist king? One can imagine how the message of the throbbing drum would affect the old King Mindon, meditating in his leisure on the philosophy of Life; Aneiksa, Dokha, Anatta; Change, Sorrow, Unreality! It

HOUSE OF THE TAUNGGWIN MINGYI

would tell a different tale to the queens growing old, to the little princesses growing up, to the laughing children of the palace. And to the people without, it would speak of the presence in their midst of a living king.

The big drum, the Baho-sigyi, is silent now, its purpose of telling the hours to a king fulfilled; and if there be any who care to waste a thought on it they will find it cobwebbed and dusty amongst other forgotten things in the Museum at Rangoon.

Looking out from the upper platform of the tower, one can see the new gilt spire of the palace glittering in the sun, the grey-red of the Hlut-daw feeble with age, and the mirrored tomb of King Mindon. Beside it stand the tombs of the Queen-Dowager of his day, the wife of King Tharawadi; and of the Alé-nan-daw Queen, the mother of Supaya-lat, whose imperious character was inherited by her daughter. Some years ago her remains were brought here in a Government steamer from Rangoon, where she died. I can remember how Rangoon was *en fête* the day they were borne in honour through its streets to the waiting ship. Yet upon this lady there rests no small portion of the blame for the massacre of the princes after King Mindon's death.



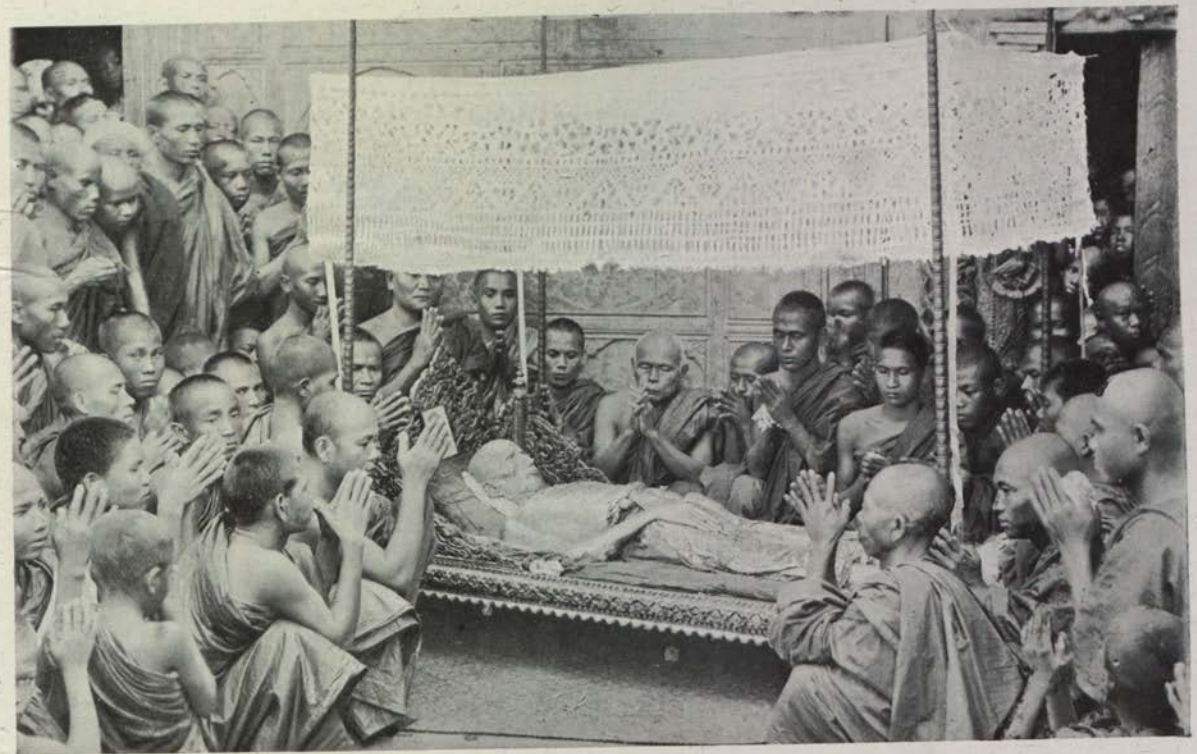
DOORWAY IN THE TAIK-TAW

The Relic House opposite is a white structure of brick, with a flight of dragon-tailed stairs leading up to it on its western face. Its prototype stood before

the Palace of Branginoco at Pegu. The Hlut-daw is a double wooden building raised on a massive platform of teak. Within it there is a gilded throne, upon which the King sat when he came at long intervals to preside over the deliberations of his Ministers. It is given up now to a Superintending Engineer, and a horde of plodding clerks engaged in the filling in of forms with as much zeal as if they were building an empire. But formerly this place was the chamber of the First Ministers of the King. They were not very successful in their efforts after rule, for some of them were narrow and ignorant, and others were opportunists concerned only about their own welfare, and nearly all were in a measure corrupt; but there were amongst them capable men who tried to pull disorder right, and withal they were engaged in great affairs, as the first men of every nation are. They had powers of life and death, and could make or mar a man's fortune. They were not a mere gang of little clerks on stools, and one feels inevitably sorry for the Hlut-daw[1] as one passes it by.

Within a little distance of the Swédaw-zin there stands the miniature monastery in which Thibaw received his education. It is an exquisite building covered all over with gold and glass mosaic. Time has been unkind to it, but it still, like the palace, blazes into sudden splendour when the long slant light of the evening sun flames upon it. It is closed now and put to no use, but for some

[1] It has been dismantled since these lines were written, and the throne within it conveyed to the Museum in Calcutta. I leave what I have written in testimony of the past.



"THE RETURN OF THE GREAT GLORY." THE BIER OF A BUDDHIST ARCHBISHOP

time after the occupation of Mandalay it was used for the administration of the Sacrament to the British troops.

Following the white road a few steps further, one comes to what remains of the old teak stockade and the Guard-house that stood by the Taga-ni, the Red Postern, where the Drum of Justice was hung. The legend of this drum relates how once in the far-away past, a hen-crane whose mate had been shot by the King's son, came and knocked with her bill on it, claiming protection. The King heard her and rendered her justice. Since then the drum has ever been placed within ear-shot of the King's chamber, that the distressed might appeal to him in their need, by striking it. A pretty irony at Thibaw's Gate!

Beyond this postern, to right and left of the white road, are the old houses of the Ministers of the King. They were required to live here to be near the Council Chamber and the Than-daw-zin, the messengers of the Royal Voice, whose function it was to convey the royal commands. The house on the left, once inhabited by the Taung-gwin Mingyi, is now practically untenanted.[1] The house on the right still shelters the Minister for whom it was built, the Honourable U Gaung, Kinwun Mingyi, Councillor of the Emperor, and a Companion of the Star of India. The man has played his part in the history of his country, and there is not a peasant in Burma who does not know his name. If one looks at this house from the road one can just tell that it is inhabited. It has a fence about it, and if one enters in a little way at the gate he will find a carriage and

[1] It has since been dismantled.

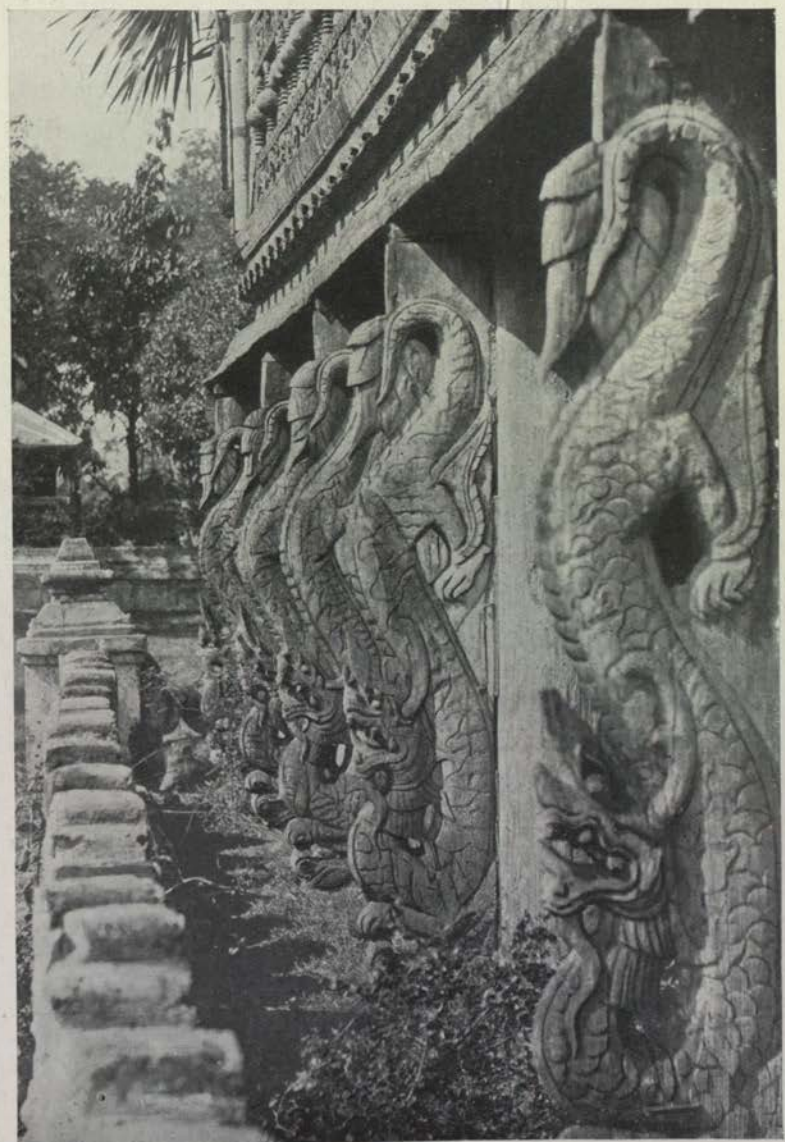
THE AUNG-PINLÉ AT DAWN

horses in the stables, and will notice a maid-servant coming down the stairs, and a man at work in the yard. But it is a sad old place, for all these symptoms of life; and to such as choose to take notice of details, it soon becomes apparent that its lines are no longer straight,

CARVED PANEL IN THE TAIK-TAW

that its roof is grey and unrepaired, that the carriage is old and shaky, and the horses lean.

It is, in short, the house of a man of some importance, but one whose greatness has departed. And though the Kinwun Mingyi is a man much honoured by the new rulers of the land, and is probably more secure of what he possesses than he could ever have been under the



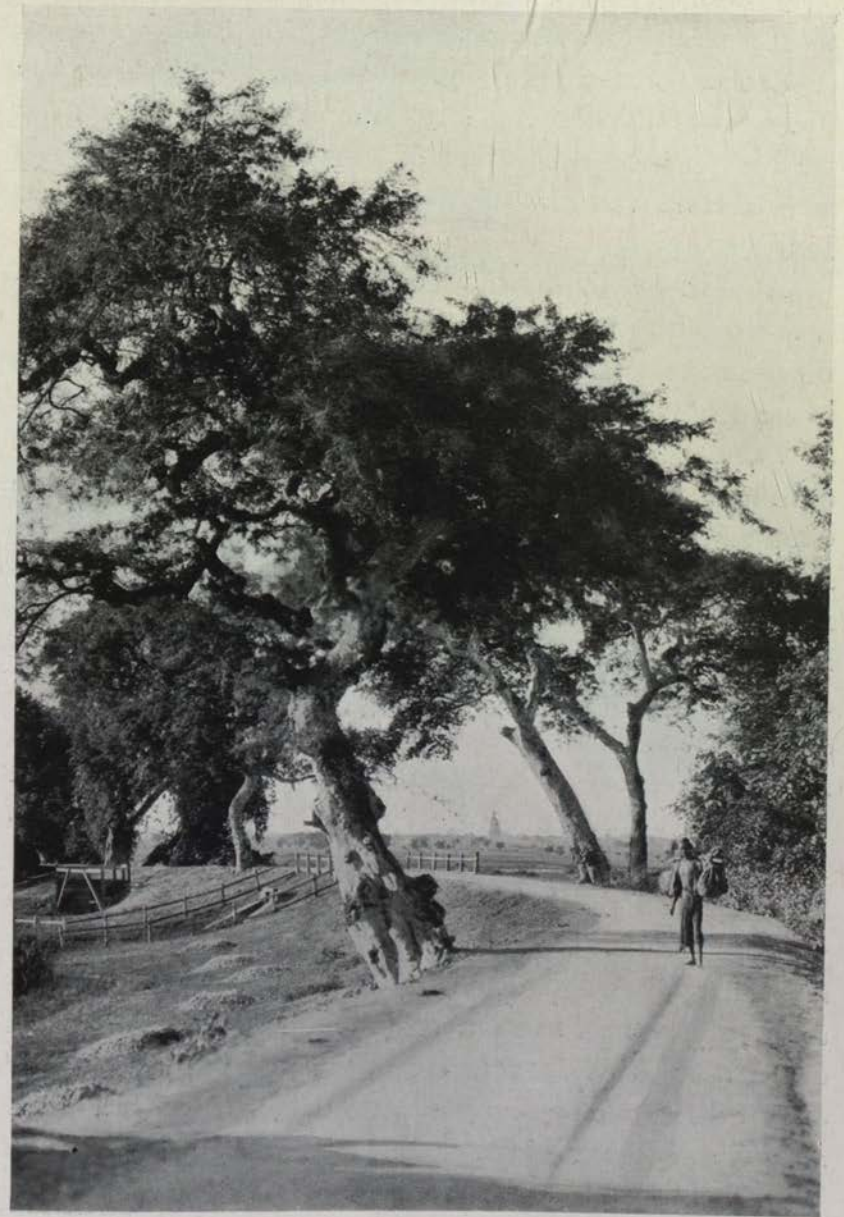
DRAGONS UPHOLDING THE TAIK-TAW

old régime, that is still not quite the same thing as being Prime Minister of one's own country, and a councillor of a king of one's own race. The time will come perhaps when men of many races will be proud of their citizenship with the foremost Empire in the world; but one cannot expect this of the quiet gentleman who lives on in this old house, a relic of a bygone day. One must allow something for the sentiment of a people.

Let us enter, and make some acquaintance with U Gaung, the Kinwun Mingyi.

As we climb up the stairs and enter the pillared but open reception-room, an old gentleman, slightly bent and trembling with age, comes forward to meet us and shake hands. A fillet of white muslin encircles his head, which is plentifully sprinkled with silver but is not yet white. He wears an immaculate white coat, and a skirt of the palest silk. He has left behind him the vanity of colour. There are no shoes upon his feet. Simplicity is now the keynote of his life. For an old man of eighty-one who has survived the greatness of his country, for one whose life has known so much of vicissitude as his, he is well-preserved. Although he speaks little, his voice is strong and clear; his hearing and intelligence are quick; his eyesight is apparently undimmed. His great age betrays itself most of all in the trembling of his hand.

He is a gentle, quiet, dignified and sad old man who greets us. He is accompanied by several of his colleagues of the past; old men who look up to him as their chief. One of them here to-day is the Shwédiké



THE ROAD TO SHAN LAND

Atwin-wun, a hearty big-voiced man, without any reserve of manner. The Atwin-wun in his day was a kind of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the keeper of the Archives of the State. The Treasury was despoiled on the night of the occupation of Mandalay, and nearly all the valuable records of the Court were scattered or destroyed.

Another of those who are here to-day is the Pan-gyet-wun, quaintly named "The Governor of the Glass Factories," a man who for a Burman is quite exceptional (since dead). In 1859 he went to France with the Count de Sacy. In 1867, after a prolonged course of study at the Pantheon, he was recalled to Mandalay, his patron the Crown Prince having been killed in a palace revolt. He speaks French fluently; his English is good. His manner is nervous, quick, intelligent, with a trace in it of irritability; his face is small, clear-cut and slightly effeminate. There is distinction about this man; but he is perhaps too quick and nervous to be dignified. Next to the Kinwun, the most stately person present is the Wet-ma-sut Wundauk, whose name the curious will find attached to that proclamation of King Thibaw which announced to his people on the 7th of November, 1885, the advent of "Those heretics, the English Kala barbarians, who having most harshly made demands calculated to bring about the injury and destruction of our religion, the violation of our national traditions and customs and the degradation of our race, are making a show and preparation as if about to wage war with our State." But the Wet-ma-sut Wundauk bears no ill-will, and he has talked to me for many a pleasant hour in the old palace, of the things

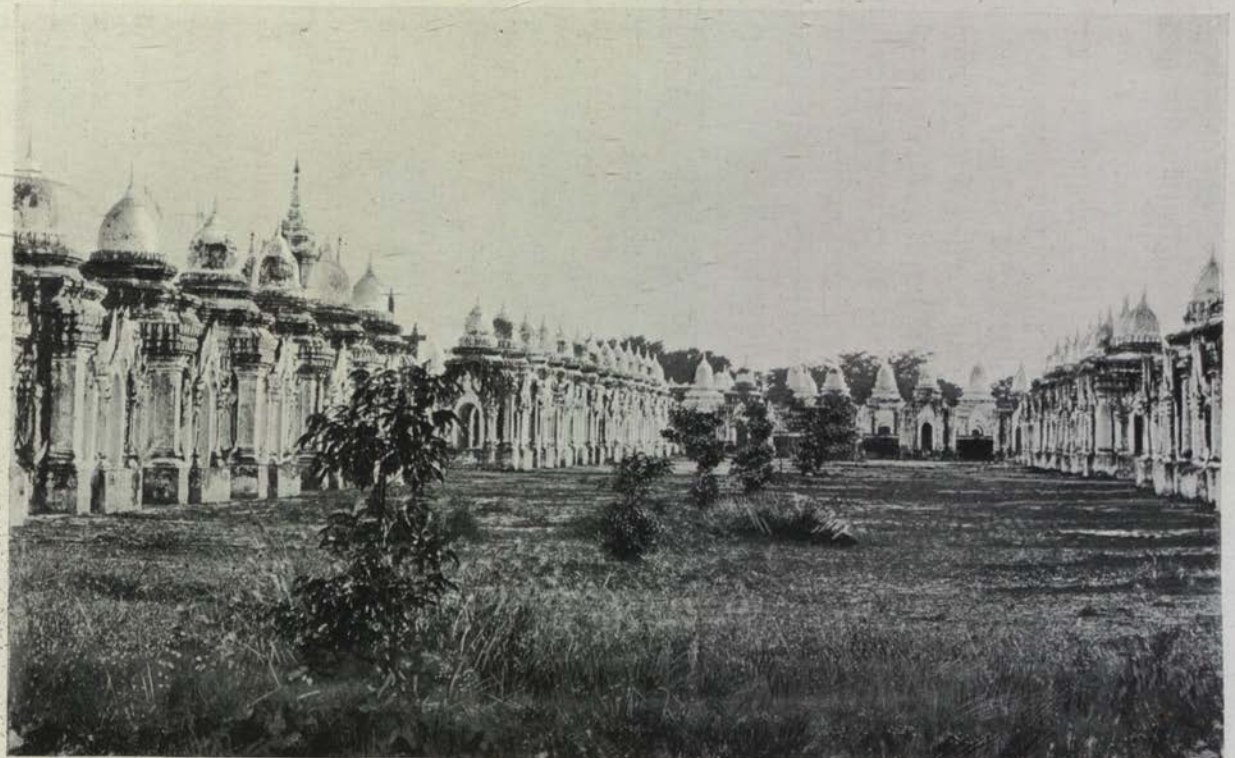
THE SHWÉ-GYAUNG MONASTERY (FORMERLY A PART OF THE ROYAL PALACE)

of the past. Like so many others of his countrymen, he has the most perfect manners.

As we sit and talk, a small table stands between us, and on this there is presently placed a tray with tea and cakes and a bunch of grapes from Amarapura. The old Minister of eighty-one leans forward and pours out the tea. Observant of small things, he is careful to anticipate the wants of his guests. In a low voice he inquires from our followers, seated here with the members of his own household on the velvet carpets with which the floor is spread, what are our respective tastes. The talk centres in interesting but neutral topics, the traditions of palace architecture, the location of the Drum of Justice, the King's visits to the Hlut-daw. To draw out the old man, in his own house, upon the delicate matters of history on which one is curious, would be to make but a poor return for his courtesy.

"I have two sons," he observes, "both in the service of the State, and I am greatly obliged to the British Government for its kindness in appointing them to posts near Mandalay, which enables me to see them frequently."

The white road, from which we have strayed so long, takes its way past commissariat stalls and soldiers' barracks, past men in the scarlet of the King, and soldiers' wives, and small white children taking the alien air, straight into the massive portals of the East Gate. Here a sentry tramps to and fro, with loaded rifle and bayonet fixed, while his fellows slumber in the guard-house pending their turn. Over the gateway there rises one of those seven-roofed spires which ornament the crenellated battlements of the royal city and give it its character of a Tartar capital.



THE KUTHO-DAW (THE BUDDHIST BIBLE IN STONE)

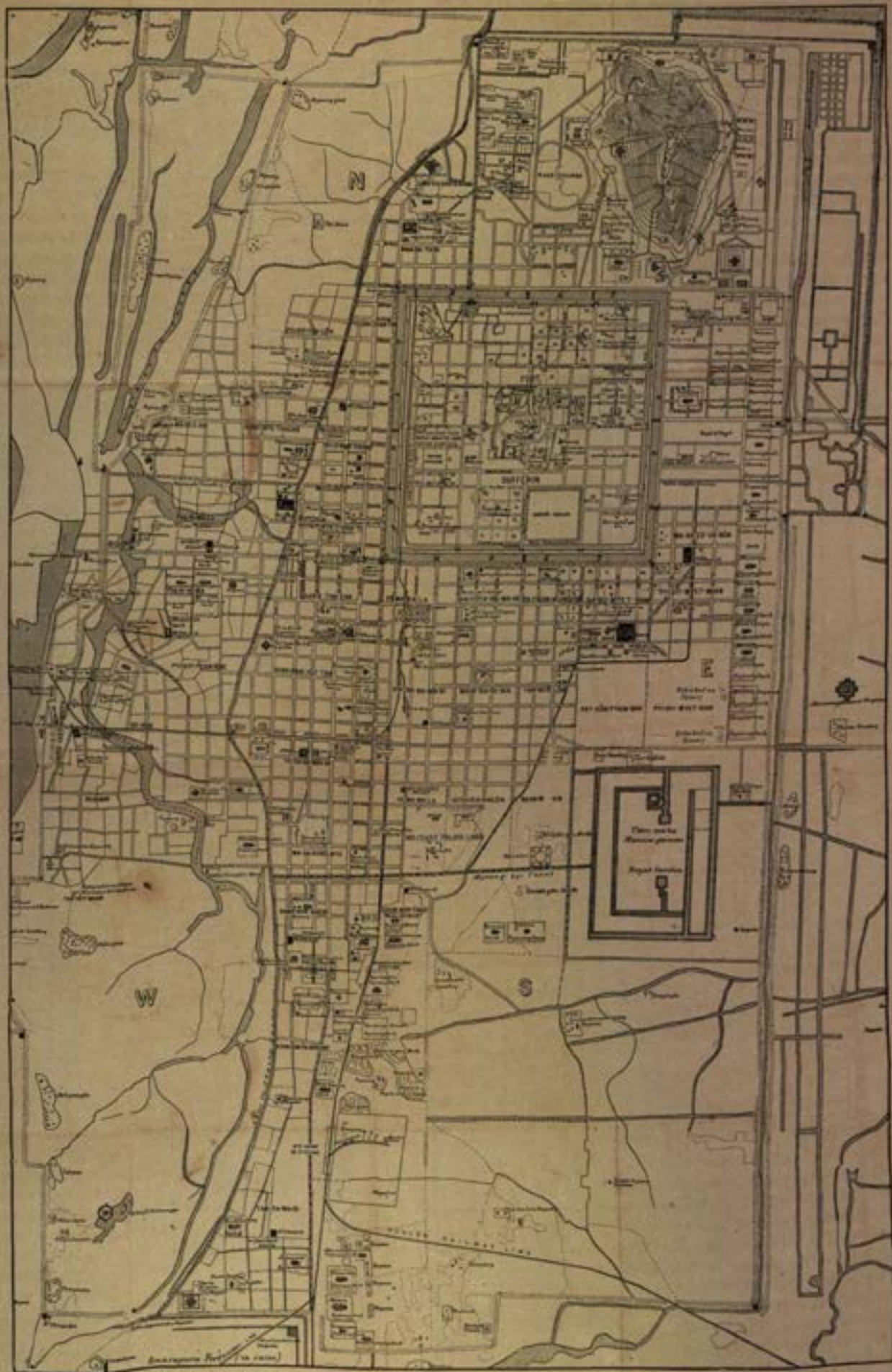
Mandalay

The great gates of Mandalay are growing rusty on their hinges, for it is not any longer the custom to close them ; but in the days of the Kings of Burma they were for ever being shut and opened. From night-fall to dawn they were always kept shut, and on many special occasions they were shut during the day. When a fire or a disturbance broke out in the city they were shut ; when any one of royal blood or great rank was ordered out to execution, they were shut ; and when the King received in audience his Ministers and subjects, or the representatives of a foreign State, on one of those Kadaw or beg-pardon days especially reserved for such occasions, the last to enter would be the Heir-apparent, and after him the great doors clanged together, and no one else could be admitted. Through this eastern gate the King passed each year on his way to the royal ploughing, the festival of the Lè Dun Mingala, a mile from the city wall.

Outside the gateway there is a guardian genius with a club on his shoulder, hidden within a white chapel, and beyond him there is a grey and white bridge over the blue moat, the haunt of fighting men in khaki from Essex and Connaught. It is worth while to stay here a moment, if only to look into the cool depths of the water, and down the long line of the red-turreted wall to where the blue shadow of Mandalay Hill competes with the pink lotus for the silver mirror of the moat.

On the left of the road, as it continues on to Yangin-daung, there stands an old monastery, which, in spite of its ruinous exterior, may well tempt us to enter for all that it has of exquisite carving and strange sights

PLAN OF MANDALAY TOWN



Reduced from the large plan published and sold by Messrs. Moses Stevenson & Co., Rangoon, to whom due acknowledgment is made

From a painting by Saya Chone.

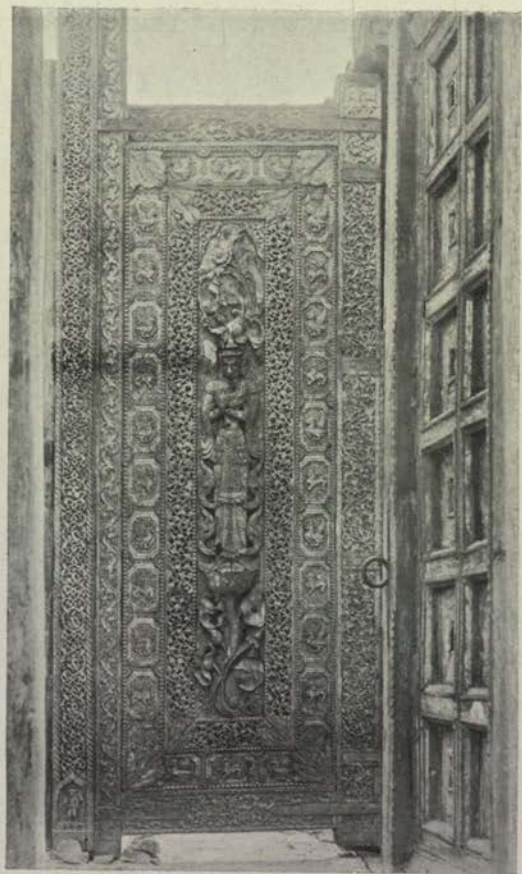
THE LÈ DUN—MINGALA.

The Royal Ploughing; a custom of Aryan antiquity. Once a year the King ploughed a field in state, with a pair of white oxen, in harness of gold and rubies.

within. At its western gate there is an elder reclining on a couch under the shade of a tamarind, his head set against a small pillow, a rosary slowly turning in his hands. He has made himself comfortable after his own fashion; but his lips are moving in prayer. The name of the monastery is

THE TAIK-TAW.

It is notable without from the carved dragons which ornament its sustaining pillars. Within, scarcely visible in the deep gloom of an inner chamber, lies in state the body of the Thathana-baing,[1] the Buddhist Archbishop of Burma, awaiting cremation. A velvet pall hides the coffin from sight, and over it there is a baldachino of



THE GREAT CARVED DOOR OF THE KUTHO-DAW

[1] The Pakan-Sadaw, who was elected by the Burmese ex-ministers, but not recognised by the English Government as the head of the Buddhist Church in Burma.

white lace. Lofty golden pillars stand about it, supporting the gilded interior of the monastery roof; and before the bier a number of novices chaunt the pious aphorisms of their faith. It is a strange spectacle in contrast with the dusty road without, the whinnying mules in the neighbouring transport yards, the movement of the secular life.

The east road leads on past the royal plough-lands to the Yangin-daung, where King Mindon projected a pagoda that was to surpass every other building on earth. The work was pushed on with feverish energy, and many of the toilers died of sickness, and the cattle of fatigue. The King strove to finish it before his death; but it never rose to a height of more than three feet, and to-day its stones are being used to pave the streets of Mandalay.

In the same direction lies, at the foot of the Shan Hills, the Aung-pinle lake—"the triumphal sea"—which supplies the royal city with water. It was dug by a bygone Prince of Pagān (Minginzaw). Millions of lotuses bloom here in their season; and along the embanked highway, with its outlets for the surplus waters, there come under the acacia avenues the bullock caravans of the Shan.

Let us turn back through the courtyard of the Taik-taw to the most wonderful object in all Mandalay, the Kutho-daw or Lawka Marazein Pagoda, where the Buddhist scriptures stand carved in stone. Here is the biggest Bible in the world, each page of it a monolith of white marble the height of a man. And each of these pages, 729 in number, has a temple to itself. The white temples stretch away in long avenues like an army of soldiers, and if you get them in a line and look down it,

you will see the great stones within like colossal mile-posts, receding far into the distance. There are rows upon rows

A PAGE OF THE KUTHO-DAW

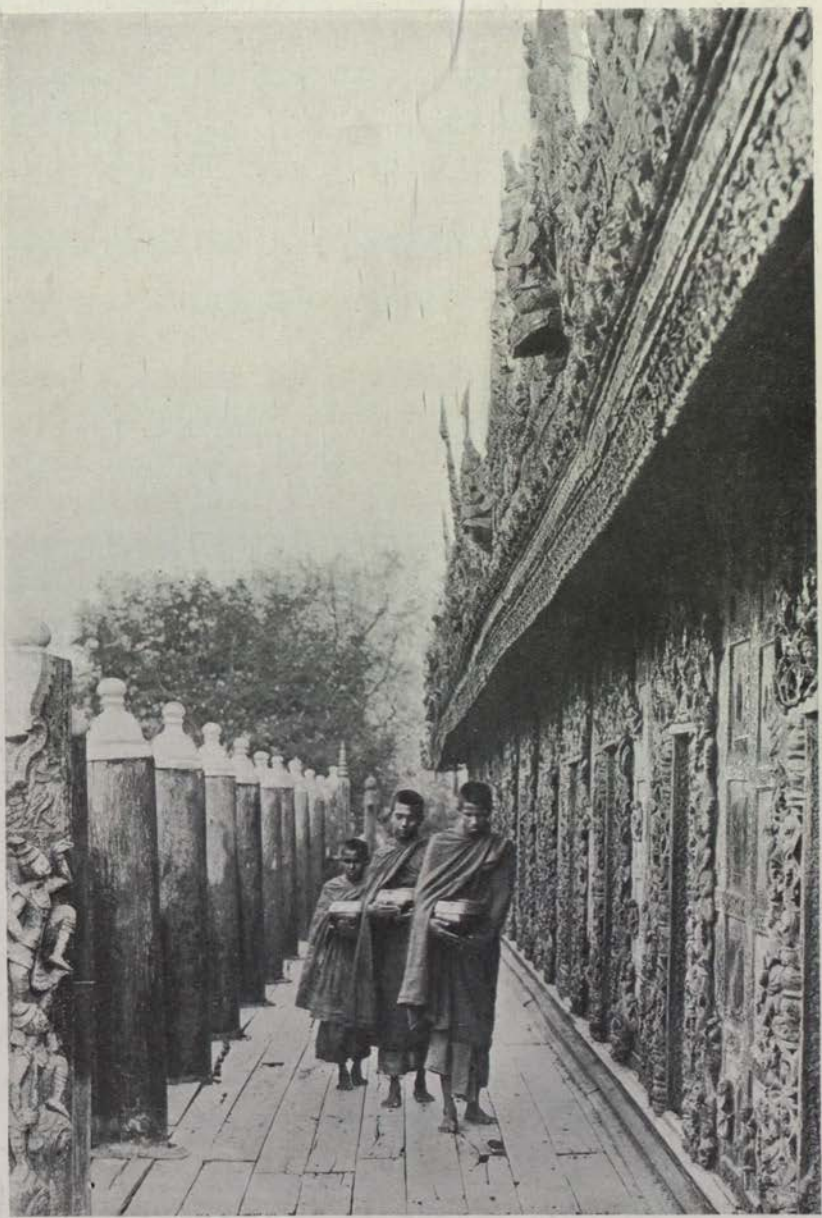
of them facing east and west and south and north, and in their midst there towers up a lofty white pagoda with a golden spire. There are great and exquisitely carved

gateways at the cardinal points, and there are rows of trees now between the temple avenues. A great stillness pervades this place, broken only by the chaunt of a novice's voice droning the graven text to a man prone within one of the temples correcting his copy of the life-giving book..

Outside as you come away you will find kneeling at the far end of one of the white stone aisles which culminate in the central pagoda, a group of worshippers : old women with white hair, and little children with shut eyes and folded hands, and wrinkled elders whose race is nearly run. They kneel here in humility without, because they are a people of exquisite instincts and because they think much of this place which enshrines in imperishable stone the message of their master ; the wisdom that they believe will guide their footsteps into the pathway of eternal peace.

Of the Kutho-daw it need only be added that the text was revised, the accuracy of the carving was certified to, by the most learned monks and officials in the city. The work extended over five years, and it was shared in by all the Ministers of the King.

Beside it rise the charred ruins of the Atumashi, the Incomparable Monastery, built by King Mindon in memory of his father, whose throne he placed within it. It was burnt to the ground in 1892. The air about it is laden with dust, and herds of goats, the property of an alien immigrant from India, lie in its precincts amidst the wild crotons, whose glistening green and purple are ever a symbol of decay in Upper Burma. Since it is a ruin now, we may read what an Englishman wrote of it in 1885.



GOING OUT TO BEG FROM THEIR GILDED HOME (SHWÉ-GYAUNG MONASTERY)

Mandalay

"In Mandalay, King Mindon erected a monastery—'the like of which there is not,' the great Incomparable—which possesses a beautiful hall, unquestionably the finest in all Mandalay. It would be no great stretch of truth to say that it is the finest in the world. The building is composed of a series of bold terraces, seven in number, rising one above another, the central one being the highest. The golden hall is carried on thirty-six pillars, some of which are seventy feet high, the ceiling reaching its greatest elevation in the high central terrace. And there a colossal figure of Gautama sits, meditating beside a golden throne intended for the King. The boldness of the general design, the noble proportions of the immense hall, and the great height of the golden roof soaring over the throne and the statue, fill the mind with surprise and pleasure. Pillars, walls, and roof are richly gilt, glass inlaying heightening the brilliancy. When the Viceroy comes to Mandalay to promulgate the decree which announces the future organisation of Burma, the ceremonial will probably be held in this noblest of throne rooms."

At the charred eastern gateway of the Incomparable Monastery there stands one of wood, "The Shwé-gyaung," that is of singular interest and beauty. It was transferred here from the palace, and it is built about the chamber in which King Mindon died. Its place on the north of the Hman-nan-daw, or Crystal Chamber of the Palace, has never been filled.

Above the Kutho-daw there rises Mandalay Hill, and its eastern edge is skirted by a road which will take us past cavalry barracks and the headquarters of the British Artillery; past lonely monasteries under acacia

trees, past the borders of the Nanda Lake, till it circles round and brings us back to the crenellated walls of the royal city, at its northern doors.

But the circuit is a long one, and we may turn from the western door of the Kutho-daw to the Sanda-Muni Pagoda, facing the north-east angle of the city. The site is historic.

FAÇADE OF THE INCOMPARABLE PAGODA

Here in the early days of his reign when King Mindon was busy with the building of Mandalay, there rose a temporary palace often frequented by the King. The collecting of the Buddhist scriptures in the library, which still stands under Mandalay Hill; the building of the monasteries and pagodas in the neighbourhood, the completion of the palace, and the allotting of sites for his

Ministers and officials ; these were the matters with which the cheery, active, and pious monarch was concerned during his stay in the temporary palace on the site of the present Sanda-Muni Pagoda. Even when his great palace was finished, he liked coming here to keep the fasts of the Buddhist Lent. And it was on one of these occasions, at the beginning of Lent in the year 1866, that he nearly lost his life in a palace revolution.

It was brought about by two of his sons, the Myingun and Myingon-daing Princes, who conceived that they had been affronted by the Heir-apparent, the Ein-she-min, a brother of the King. Rushing in with their followers at the southern and eastern gates of the royal city, they attacked the Ein-she-min and slew him on the steps of the Hlut-daw.

The Myingon-daing, who cut off his uncle's head, rushed with it to the Myingun, shouting:

"*Aung daw mu byi!*" ("We've conquered, we've done it!")

From the Hlut-daw, slaying princes and officials as they went, the conspirators made for their father, the King. In this purpose they must have succeeded had not a few devoted officers sacrificed themselves in the effort to give him time to escape. He fled with a small following to the northern gate of the city, where he "came upon the Shwédazwe Bo, Maung Paikkyi, who had been specially posted there by the Myingun Prince, with orders to kill the King. Of this the King knew nothing. He recognised him, however, and said:

"'Nga Paik!' ("Carry me to the palace.")

"The Bo came forward, and as he did so the Metkaya

A STAIRCASE OF THE INCOMPARABLE

and Kya-bin Princes saw a *da* in his hands and took it from him. The King then climbed on his back, and they set out to the palace. The chief queen was carried by Kalabyo-thinnat Saye Maung-Chaung, and the princes and the household followed close behind. On their way they came upon a pony belonging to the Anauk Wun, Maung Tattu, the brother of the Tadaingshe Queen, the mother of the rebel princes. This the King mounted, and the party reached the palace in safety."

Meanwhile the Myingon-daing Prince, after killing the three officials mentioned above, had been searching for the King in the inner apartments, and now burst into the main room, with a sword in each hand, shouting:

"The King is nowhere to be found; he has escaped us."

He then made, with his brother, for the palace, but too late. At the Taga-ni, where all men were obliged to bow their heads in obeisance to the palace, they were met by a volley from the steps of the Myé-nan, or Hall of Audience, directed by the Metkaya Prince (the eldest of those who died later in the massacre of King Thibaw). The rebel princes eventually escaped across the border into British territory, and were interned. One of them, the Myingun, residing at Pondicherry in 1885, was a candidate for the throne of Burma on the fall of the King Thibaw, but his murder of his uncle and his attempt to kill his father were held to detract somewhat from the merit of his claims. He is now residing quietly at Saigon in French Cochin-China.

On the site of the temporary palace, and over the bodies of the Crown Prince and of those of royal blood who died with him, the Sanda-Muni Pagoda was built.

THE EXAMINATION HALLS OF THE PATAMARYAN

Moving on from it to the west, we come to the Kyauk-taw-gyi Pagoda. At its eastern portals there still stand, but on the verge of desolation, the noble halls, carved in teak and overlaid with gold, in which the annual Patamabyan, or examinations of monks and novices in theological learning, were held. Here King Thibaw took that degree which first brought him into notice; and here, during many years, the pious monarch fostered the labours of the candidates. Every foot of this part of Mandalay is intimately associated with the life of Mindon Min.

SPIRE OF THE PALACE—MANDALAY HILL IN THE DISTANCE

Within the Kyauk-taw-gyi sits a colossal figure of Gautama, carved from a solid block of Sagyin marble. It was brought here with immense labour and protracted ceremony in the year 1864. Ten thousand men took thirteen days to drag it merely from the edge of the Shwé-ta-chaung canal to its present site, and its carving and erection were watched with the greatest interest by the King and all his Court. Indeed the King himself instructed the sculptors as to the shaping of the face of

the great image. His pious zeal, we must suppose, was greater than his artistic talent, for the image, like the building which shelters it, is exceedingly ugly. Eighty-eight figures of monks in marble face it along the four sides of the square in which it stands. Its neighbour, the San Gyaung Daik, was of old the residence of the Thathana-baing, the Buddhist Archbishop of Burma. He died in the year 1866, and was buried with great honours. As the remains passed by to the funeral pyre, the King and Queen came out in state from the temporary palace to do them honour, and the Ein-she-min, the Princes, and the Ministers of State followed the train to the place of burning. The San Gyaung is tottering to decay. Half a century suffices to kill these beautiful wooden buildings, with all their wealth of bold decoration; and in the courtyard there already lie the fallen props and timbers of the *zin-gyan*, the covered walk, in which the dead Archbishop once paced between his meditations.

THE KYAUK-TAW-GYI

South of these buildings there was a row of thirty-three *zayats* or rest-houses, built by King Mindon for pious visitors to Mandalay, and for the monks who assembled here for the Patamabyan examinations. Most of these have disappeared in the fires that have ravaged Mandalay. In one, so recently as 1892, there was burnt the most striking image in the royal city, a figure of the Buddha which stood on Mandalay Hill, pointing with outstretched finger to the city at his feet. Flights of steps cut in the stone of the hillside, and covered with winged roofs that are tottering to ruin, lead to the summit of the hill.

A view of extraordinary splendour awaits those who make the steep ascent. From there, every feature of the royal city is displayed before the eye; its red battlements and gilded spires, its four-square moat like a river about it, the white temples of the Kutho-daw, the blue Shan mountains on the east, and in the west the circling Irrawaddy under the crumpled heights of Sagaing. The sides of Mandalay Hill are bare and barren, but it has long drawn the attention of the people, for it is a striking landmark, and it is believed by many to be rich in precious stones.

A little way beyond the San Gyaung stands the Salin Kyaung Daik, a place of peace—flanked by a British race-course on one side and a British rifle range on the other. The Abbot, living amongst such surroundings, has learnt to be something of a man of the world; and the patter of the soldiers' bullets, and the rush of racing ponies under his windows, has not soured his liking for Englishmen. He is anxious to tell us as we enter, that we are welcome under his roof. His most cherished possession is

THE KUTHO-DAW, AND THE INCOMPARABLE MONASTERY BEFORE IT WAS BURNT DOWN, FROM MANDALAY HILL

a letter from Lord Roberts, who often came to see him when, as Commander-in-Chief in India, he was quartered at Mandalay. The fading ink on the torn paper records a hope that Englishmen will treat with consideration the kindly old man and his beautiful monastery, of which he is very proud.

Its carving is exceptionally fine and it is distinguished from nearly every other great monastery built by a royal personage in Mandalay, for it has no trace of gold upon it. Perhaps it is the most beautiful monastery in all Burma.

Beyond it there is the Yaw Mingyi's Monastery, built of brick, and extravagantly carved in plaster. Within, an old monk sits, lost in dreams of the sadness and futility of life. He is very gentle of mien, but he does not offer to rise as we enter, or to speak a word. In silence we enter, and in silence we leave the darkened chamber for the world outside. To the old man, meditating, we are of no consequence at all; mere passing phantoms thrown upon the screen of sense. The world is nothing to him.

FROM THE NORTH GATE

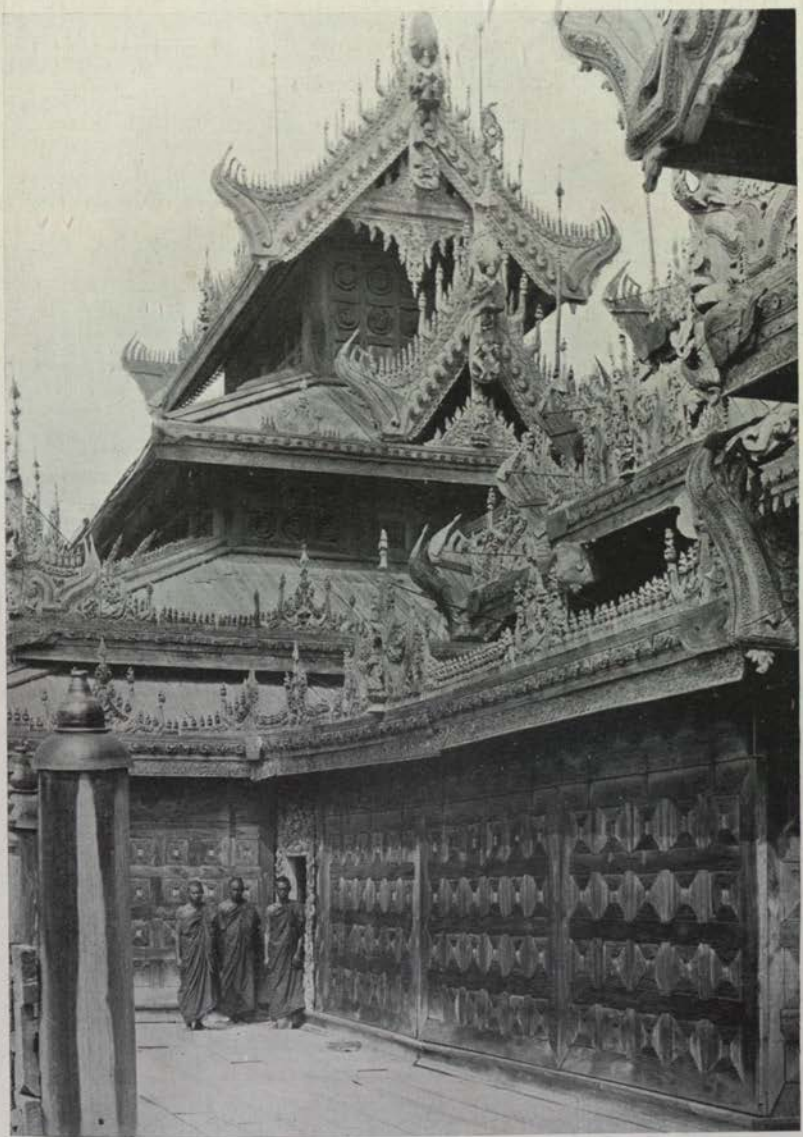
From the Northern Door of the palace there reaches away to the Great North Gate another of those straight white roads which are a feature of Mandalay, and have been a conspicuous feature of every Burmese city of which there is any record. "The streets thereof are the fairest that I have seen; they are as straight as a line from one gate to another, and standing at one gate you may discover the other; and they are as broad as that ten

THE SALIN KYAUNG

or twelve men may ride abreast in them." The words, written by Cesar Fredrick four hundred years ago of Pegu, are true of Mandalay to-day, and they serve but to show that in these, as in a hundred other particulars, this new old city of King Mindon Min is a survival of the past of Burma.

It may be that the Queen's Garden on the left of this northern road, as we take our way along it from the palace, is one of the newer details. Canals and water-courses wind here through little artificial hills and grottos, and long arrays of swooning palms line the broader waters. Meant to fulfil some purpose of beauty or of pleasure in the days when she came here followed by her maids-of-honour, there is in all Mandalay nothing more desolate now than this Garden of the Queen. The dark canals are choked with weeds and fallen leaves; the masonry grottos and arbours that were once secluded, are laid brutally bare to the eye; the steps and stairs are now crumbling away, and the only inhabitants of the place are the carrion kites, which break away in flights from the overhanging trees when a stranger wanders into their midst. A few yards away the society of Mandalay gathers every afternoon in the throne-room of the Queen; but her garden is unfrequented.

On the right of the road upon which we are travelling there are some tombs of departed members of the royal family, and a building that was once much frequented by King Mindon when he sought for a quiet place of meditation. It is now used by a military officer as a place of residence. In this neighbourhood there were buried the remains of the Myauk-nan-daw Queen, the



THE ABBOT AND HIS BRETHREN AT THE SALIN KYAUNG

wife of King Mindon's youth before he came to the throne of Burma. She was the only person not of royal blood who was ever buried within the precincts of the palace, and her remains were dug up by order of Queen Supaya-lat and removed to the common burying-ground.

Once I was talking to an old man, than whom there is no one in Burma better equipped to give a really luminous account of the interior life of the palace in the reign of King Mindon.

"The King," he said, "loved his first wife very deeply, and it was his love for her that first drew his attention to the Christian doctrine of Immortality. In this he saw some hope of reunion with her after death, and he would not suffer her to be cremated, lest she should not meet him in the form he knew and loved."

There is no trace now of the place where she lay.

The north road is flanked a little further on by the royal canal which brings water to the palace gardens. It enters the royal city through the Thaung-gé Gate in the eastern wall, and it was dug by command of King Mindon a year before his death. Along this waterway, silent now and scarcely to be found save by an ardent seeker, he travelled in state in his golden pleasure-boat to visit the monasteries and sacred buildings to the north-east of the royal city.

Leaving the North Gate, and crossing the wide bridge over the moat, let us see what the north-western suburbs of the city have to offer.

Here is Seventy-Sixth Street, where the iron-workers toil and the air resounds to the din of their hammers

falling on iron pots and monkish begging-bowls. Next them, wheelwrights are at work, and under the sheds stacks of trim wheels are piled ready for sale. The new road is unmetalled, and at this dry season the white dust hangs over everything like a pall. The houses here are small and humble, and but for its human interest the neighbourhood would not be tempting.

THE YAW-MINGYI'S MONASTERY

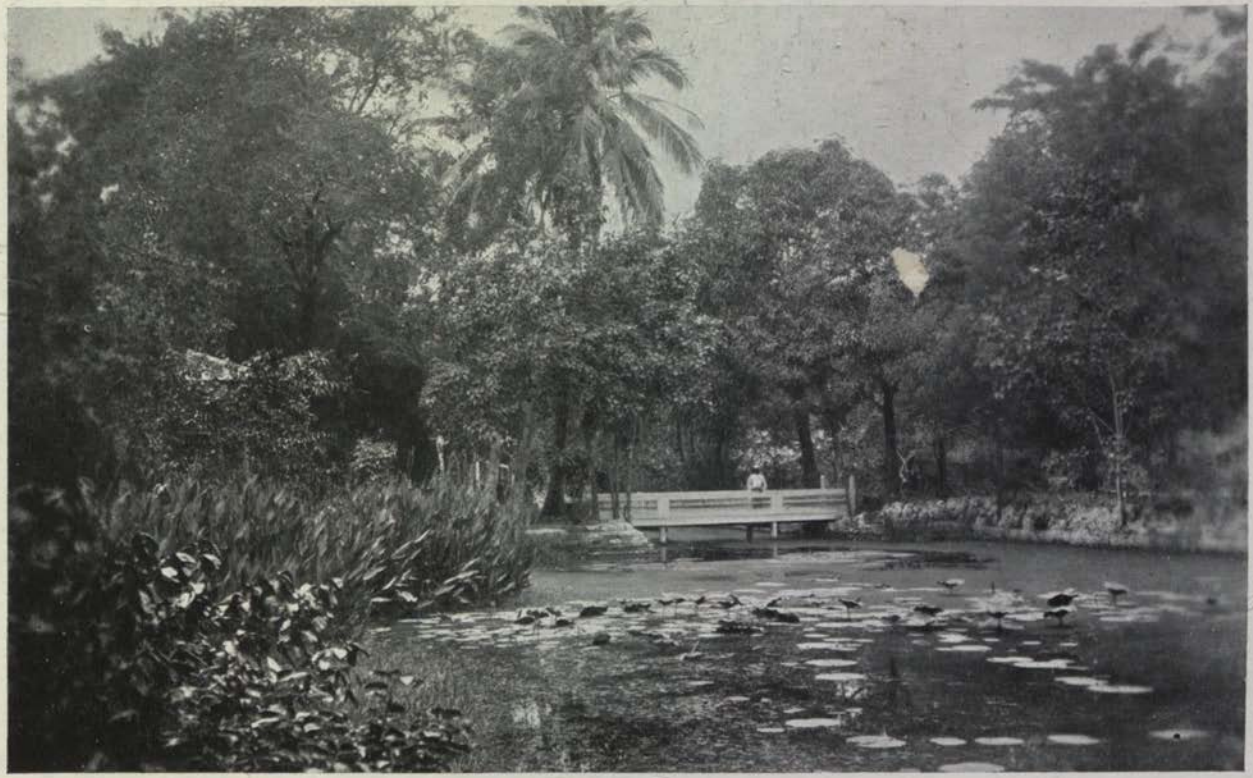
Turning away to the west, we come over a wide and open space to the Ayeikmatwet Pagoda and its adjoining *tazoungs* of white wedding-cake stucco. The grey and tottering monasteries which stand beside it are slowly giving way to newer and humbler buildings of plaited mat and uncarved wood; a transition that is symbolic of the change that has come over the character of Mandalay.

A short way to the south of this is the Shan Waing of the Thibaw Sawbwa, a four-square enclosure with small brick gateways. Here caravans rest, and the big-hatted, wide-trousered men from the Shan highlands, with their pack cattle, may be seen gathered for the night. A tax is still levied on this inn, a survival from the King's days when it was levied in token of political supremacy over all Shan visitors. Beside the Waing is the residence of the Sawbwa, overlooking a small garden whose cool waterways and shady clumps of trees are in grateful contrast with the world of dust outside. The large masonry tank adjoining is crowded with girls busy filling their water-pots.

SHAN SAWBWAS ON A VISIT TO MANDALAY

On the far side of the Waing, looking west, is the Tha-ye-ze Bazaar, tattered, but full of life. It is one of the many little bazaars which feed the outlying quarters of Mandalay.

Behind it is the Shwé-ta-chaung, a royal canal dug



NOONDAY PEACE IN THE PALACE GARDENS

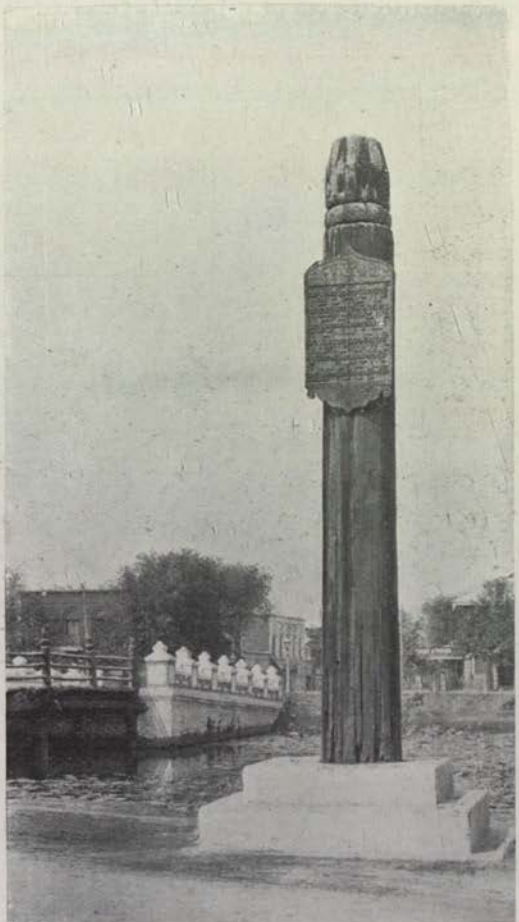
by King Bagyi-daw a hundred years ago, and used in later days to transport the great image of the Kyauk-taw-gyi Pagoda. On the banks of this canal, which flows right through the Western suburb of Mandalay, there is here established a colony of washermen; natives of India who live in native huts, and wash for the white population. Clothes-lines and bamboo supports make

STAIRS BY THE QUEEN'S THRONE-ROOM

fantastic patterns between the rows of huts; countless piles of linen lie on the banks of the *chaung*, and the washermen beat and hammer clothes all through the day, on wooden slabs that jut into the water. At this dry season, only a great straining of courtesy will enable us to call this long, irregular line of stagnant, weed-hidden water a stream; and it is with something of horror that

one realises that in it the body-clothes of the English of Mandalay are cleaned.

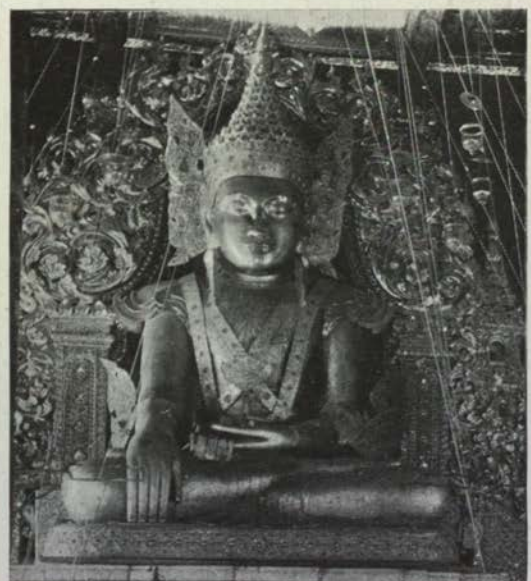
It is scarcely as much a change as one might expect from this little alien colony of washermen, where the Indian women go to and fro, clanking at their ankles, meek and veiled and subject to their Lords, to the neighbouring Burmese quarter. For the dust assails us everywhere, and the sheer brutality of it depresses the spirits. Colour, gaiety, are impossible in such an atmosphere, and in this "East End" of Mandalay the Burmese woman loses her wonted charm. The hard dry climate and the hot sun darken and shrivel her skin, and it is true, when all is said, that the women of Mandalay lack the plump debonair beauty of their southern sisters.



THE PILLAR AT THE GATE

THE WEST GATE

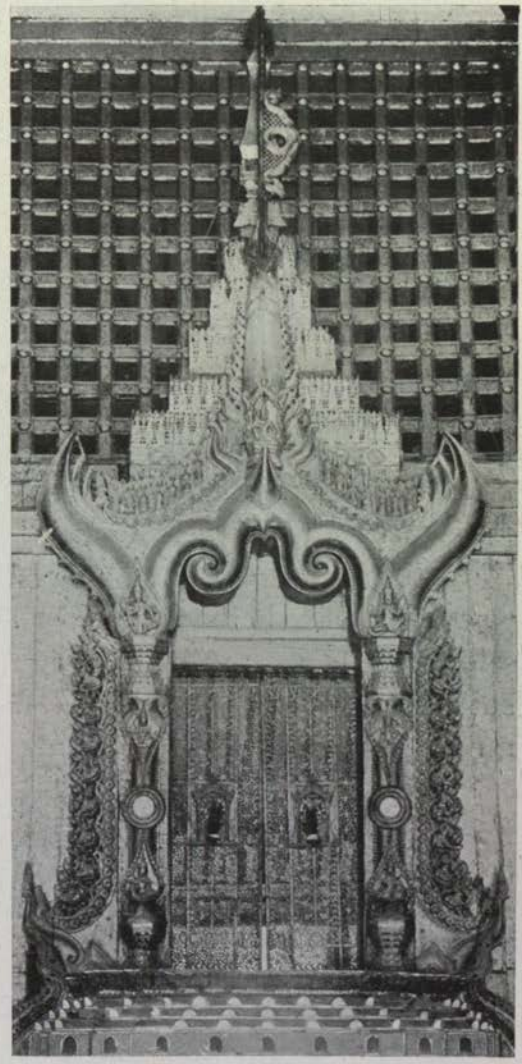
At the western entrance of the palace, where a flight of new stairs leads from the useless cannon without to the gilded throne-room of the Queen of Burma, there is gathered the English society of Mandalay. Evening after evening the women come here, a little pale, as English women are in the East; evening after evening the men gather here from the polo-ground and the tennis court; the band plays, the markers call the scores at the billiard tables in the Queen's Hall of Audience. On the mirrored walls hang the latest telegrams from Europe; at the foot of the throne, picture papers portray the incidents of some city pageant, some royal procession, some battle of the Empire. Long men lie in the easy-chairs under the swinging fans or sit in the Queen's inner chamber playing at whist and poker. The swish of soda-water bottles, the crack of ice, the click of billiard balls;—of such is the western end of the palace to-day.



THE BRAZEN IMAGE OF THE THET-KYA-THIHA MONASTERY

It seems a desecration of a palace to put it to such

uses, yet for my own part, I can only say that some of the happiest days of my life have been passed here amidst these surroundings; here, and in the summer houses and precincts of the palace. Every time I have made a journey with Mandalay for my ultimate destination, I have looked forward to the prospect of returning to the shelter of the palace; to sitting in one of these long arm-chairs; to reading these telegrams on the mirrored walls; to looking at my countrywomen going to and fro amongst the golden pillars of the hall. So I must leave it to others to point out the undoubted enormity of our being there.[1]



THE LILY THRONE

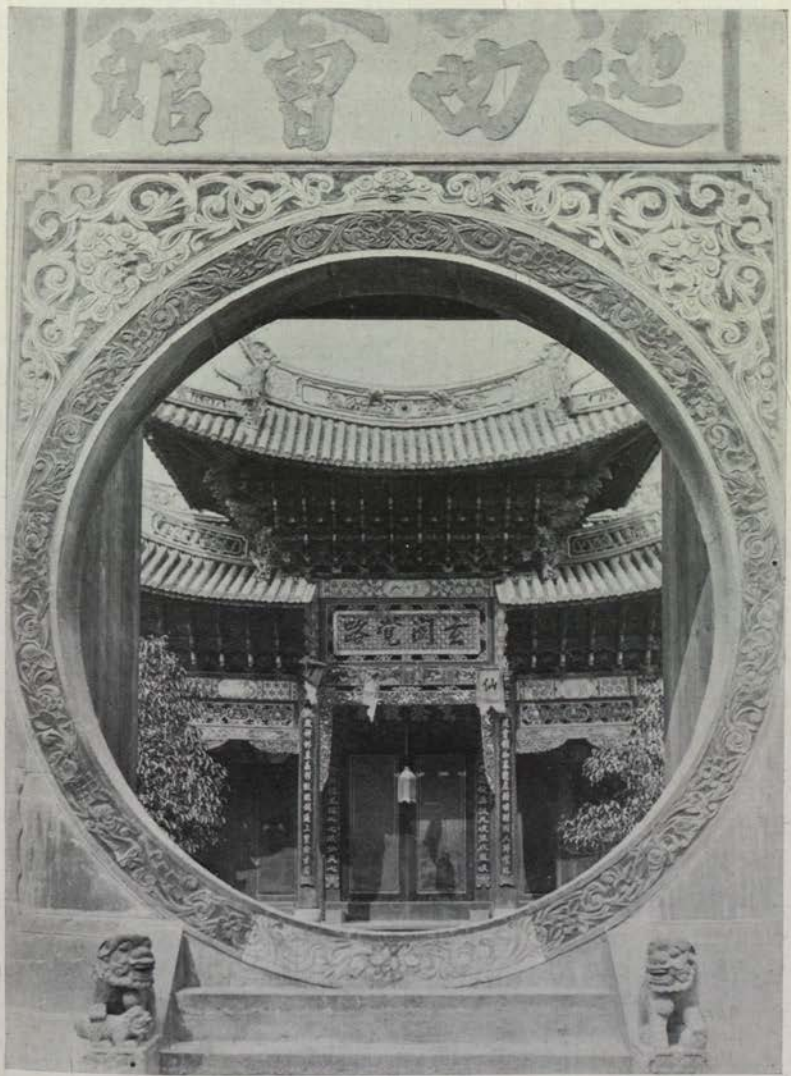
I will ask the reader to come with me instead on a

[1] The strong unanswerable reasons for moving the Club in the interests of the Palace itself, will be found in Lord Curzon's Minute, at the end of this volume.

journey of exploration through the Western Gate of the royal city. To right and left of us as we go stand the barracks of the Native Infantry; and the squares are crowded with bearded Sikhs and lithe Afridis, and recruits in white mufti learning the first lessons the Empire has to teach her children. A sentry walks at the great gate, but we pass unchallenged. Outside it there stands a red wooden pillar with a tablet carved in letters of gold, recording the foundation of the city of Mandalay. There are four such pillars at each of the principal gates of the city. Beyond the pillar is the moat, crossed by a long bridge, over which the roadway takes us into the trading centre of the town. It is now the most important part of Mandalay, but in the King's days it was treated as of little consequence, for it was reserved for funeral processions. English shops now flank the street; the only hotel and the post office are here, and the billiard saloons are full of soldiers in khaki. All this is practically new, and useful, but not delectable. Crossing over to it from the palace is rather like crossing from Westminster to "The Borough."

From here the town stretches away to the west till it reaches the river and the outermost wall of Mandalay.

On the south it reaches to the Aracan Pagoda, at which point the new and the old city join hands. The great area between is divided up into blocks by roads which cut each other at right angles. Many of them are still unmetalled; a mire in the rain, choked with dust in the dry weather. New brick buildings are growing up in many places since the sumptuary law against them no longer exists, and the old landmarks are growing more and more isolated amidst their new surroundings. The Municipality



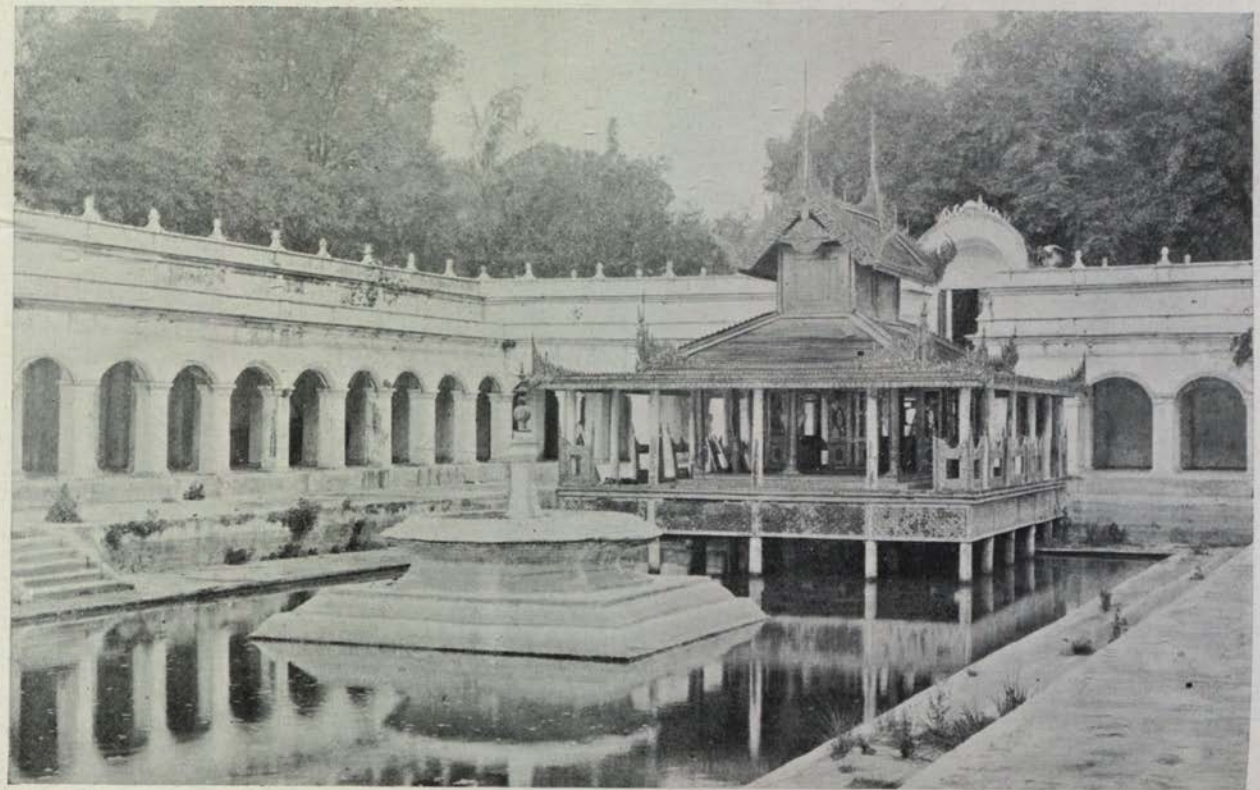
THE JOSS-HOUSE, MANDALAY, SEEN THROUGH ITS CIRCULAR DOOR

which controls all this portion of the capital finds the area too large for its resources. Herds of black scavenging pigs, relics of the past of Mandalay, may still be seen making their rounds from house to house in the remoter suburbs, and every house has its cur to bark at the passing stranger. There is a very large community of very poor people in Mandalay who feel the strain even of the light taxation to which they are subject. By all these people the change in the fortunes of Mandalay, which has converted it from a royal capital into a provincial town, is bitterly resented. They cannot forget that in the King's days they paid no taxes whatever; that twenty thousand people found an easy living in the palace; and that money perpetually flowed from the royal coffers into the hands of the silk-weavers, the embroiderers, the artisans, the soldiers, and the innumerable hangers-on of Royalty.

Mandalay, in this as in other respects, cannot go back to its past. Its future is doubtful. It was expected that the extinction of the Court would rapidly reduce its population; but this has not occurred. It seems probable that Mandalay will retain its present proportions so long as the palace survives and it is the chief administrative centre of Upper Burma. But each year must lessen its importance by comparison with Rangoon; and as the population of the country increases and new centres of activity are developed, it may cease even to be the second city in Burma.

Let us continue our journey.

Here, within a few yards of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which owes its existence to the liberality of a Burmese convert, are the dilapidated remnants of the



BATH OF MAIDS-OF-HONOUR, MANDALAY PALACE (SINCE DISMANTLED)

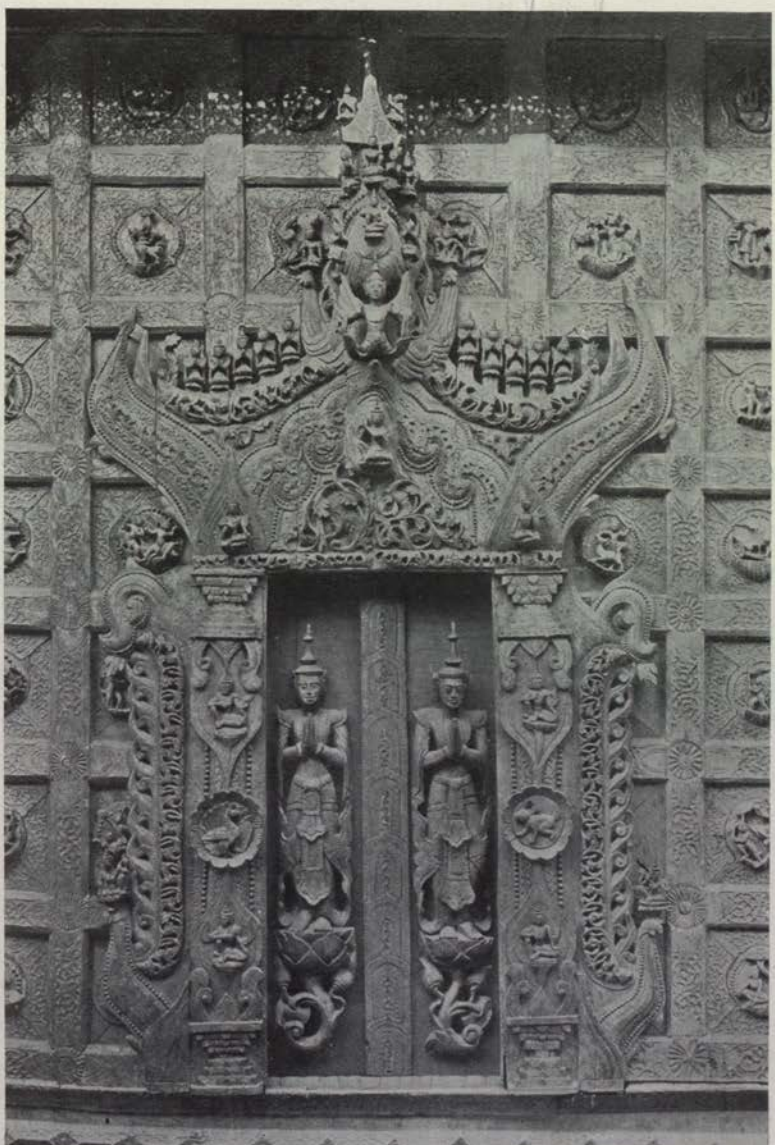
Zé-gyo-daw, the Royal Bazaar. For many years it poured a steady stream of wealth into the Treasury of the King, and even now that it is a shambles, it yields a handsome revenue to his successor, the Municipality of Mandalay; so conservative, so long-suffering is the East. It was destroyed by fire some five years ago, and its present tenants live on under the squalid shelter of strips of corrugated iron supported by charred posts.[1]

But when I first visited the bazaar of Mandalay, it amply sustained its reputation as a place of interest and beauty. Within its sheltered gloom the finest silks of Burma and the prettiest girls of Mandalay awaited the attention of the traveller, and crowds of strange people thronged its narrow ways; the long-robed Persian, the baggy-trousered Shan, the Surati in his cap of cloth of gold, the Chinaman from Yunnan, the Jew from Bussorah and Bagdad, and his rival the expatriated Armenian. All these people are still to be seen pursuing their avocations in the streets of Mandalay, though no longer amidst the pageantry of the bazaar.

Proceeding south, down Eighty-Fifth Street, we pass by the Thet-kya-thiha Pagoda, where a great brass image is enshrined. Its weight is 70,000 lb., and it was brought here with great circumstance from Amarapura by King Thibaw in the December previous to his fall. It was cast by King Bagyi-daw in 1826, and began its career in the city of Ava. Both of the Kings who moved it were unfortunate.

East of it are the two Joss-Houses of the Chinese community. One of these, lately built by the Yunnanese

[1] A fine new bazaar has since been built.



IN THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN MONASTERY (A MASTERPIECE OF THE CARVER'S ART)

merchants of Mandalay, is the finest Chinese temple in Burma. Its most striking feature is the outer circular door, through which the minor courts and winged roofs of the temple can be seen. This circular door is peculiar to Chinese temple architecture, and one of its most marked characteristics. Over the doorway there is an inscription which proclaims the Celestial sense of superiority in the words :

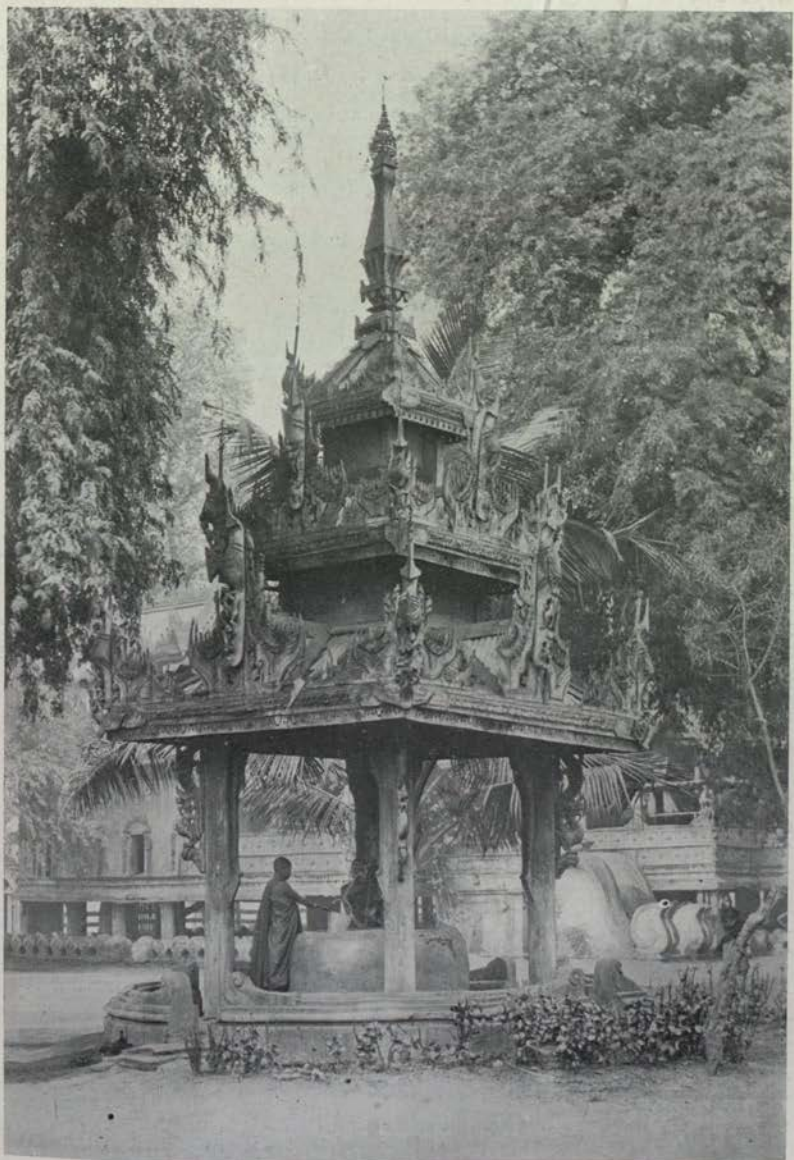
"Even in the country of the Barbarians there is Enlightenment."

Other buildings of note in this western suburb are the Ein-daw-ya Pagoda, built on the site of a former palace of King Pagān, and the Queen's Golden Monastery, a magnificent building in the most lavish style of Burmese wooden architecture, which was barely completed when Queen Supaya-lat was carried away a prisoner from Mandalay.

V. THE PALACE

The Palace from which we have set out on every journey to the city is the centre to which our steps return. It is because there was a king in Burma that the palace was built, and it was because the palace was built that Mandalay came into existence. The two are inseparably associated, and without the Palace the City would be of little interest.

Yet the palace upon a first acquaintance can only bring disappointment. It is described in such words of magnificence by its own people ; it left such a mark upon the minds of those who came to it as Ambassadors and Envoys in the days when it was wrapped in the



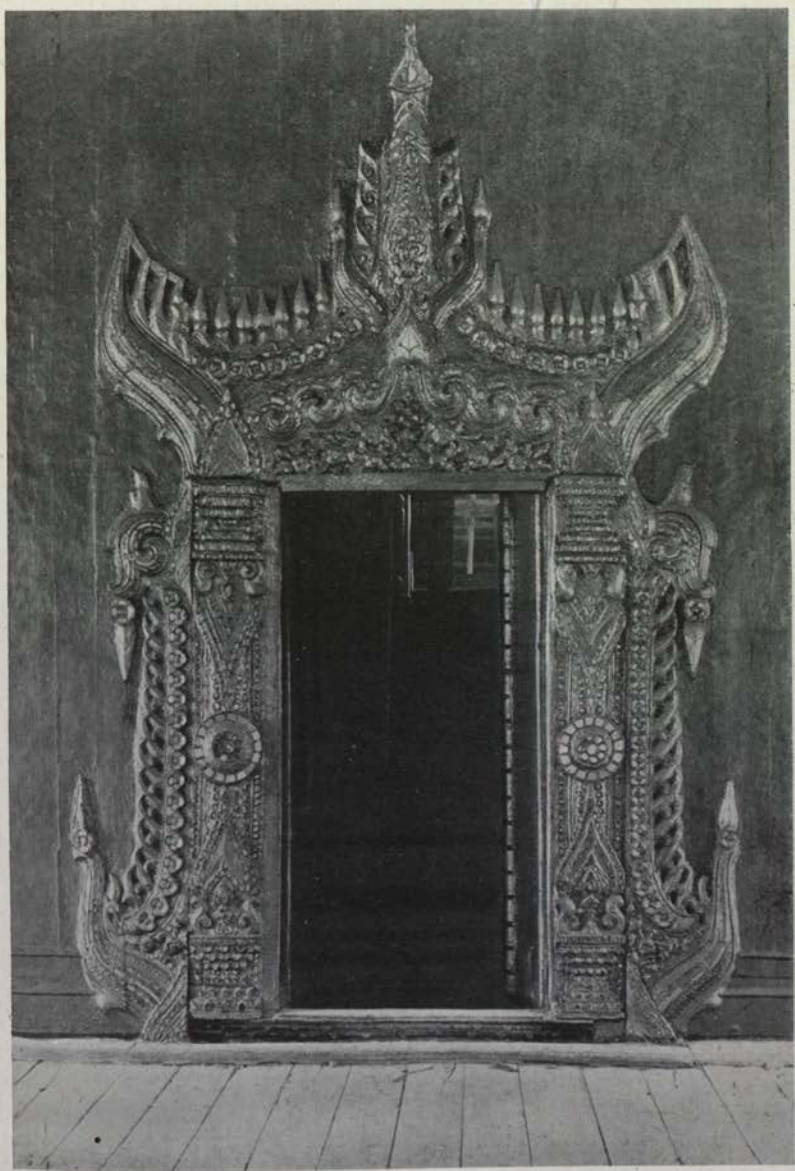
AT THE WELL—THE QUEEN MONASTERY

mystery of kingship; it claims so obviously to stand for the highest achievement in the national architecture, that a feeling of disappointment on first beholding it is inevitable. For when all is said the world is entitled to expect something exceptional of a palace, wherever it may be; but most of all in a country of which the palace is the centre, as the palace of the kings of Burma was meant to be. Here, if anywhere, it would be reasonable to look for the highest expression of the national power. But one who comes on a brief visit with such expectations, had better, in the cause of unbroken illusions, stay away. It is only with time, with the growth of sympathy, that the charm and beauty of the palace steal on one. Only when one has lived within its precincts, and listened to the music of its spire, and seen the sun flame on its golden eaves, and the moonlight at play upon its walls, does he come to care for it and appreciate its character.

To live in it day after day, to see the cheery people come and go, lost in admiration of its wonders, as country people wander through The Tower—to sit by its dark canals or walk alone in its silent chambers, to see old Ministers of the King, gentlemen of the most perfect manners, walking reverently through it with their shoes in their hands, while commoner folk go clad; that is the way to know this poor old tottering, gorgeous, beautiful, superficial, palace of Mindon Min.

Let us make such acquaintance with it as is possible on paper.

It is built on a raised platform that is nine hundred feet long and five hundred feet across, and it consists of



THE GOLDEN DOOR BEHIND THE THRONE

one hundred and twenty buildings, nearly all of which are of wood. In intention it is a Hall of Audience, the living-place of the King, and the abode of all his women. Complicated at first sight, it is essentially simple in plan. For a line drawn across it, the Mayapin, distinguishes clearly between all of it on the east which men might enter, and that portion of it on the west exclusively reserved for women, and one man only, the King. The eastern third, with its eight ceremonial thrones, its lofty spire known as "The Centre of the Universe," and its really noble Hall of Audience, is by far the most important portion.

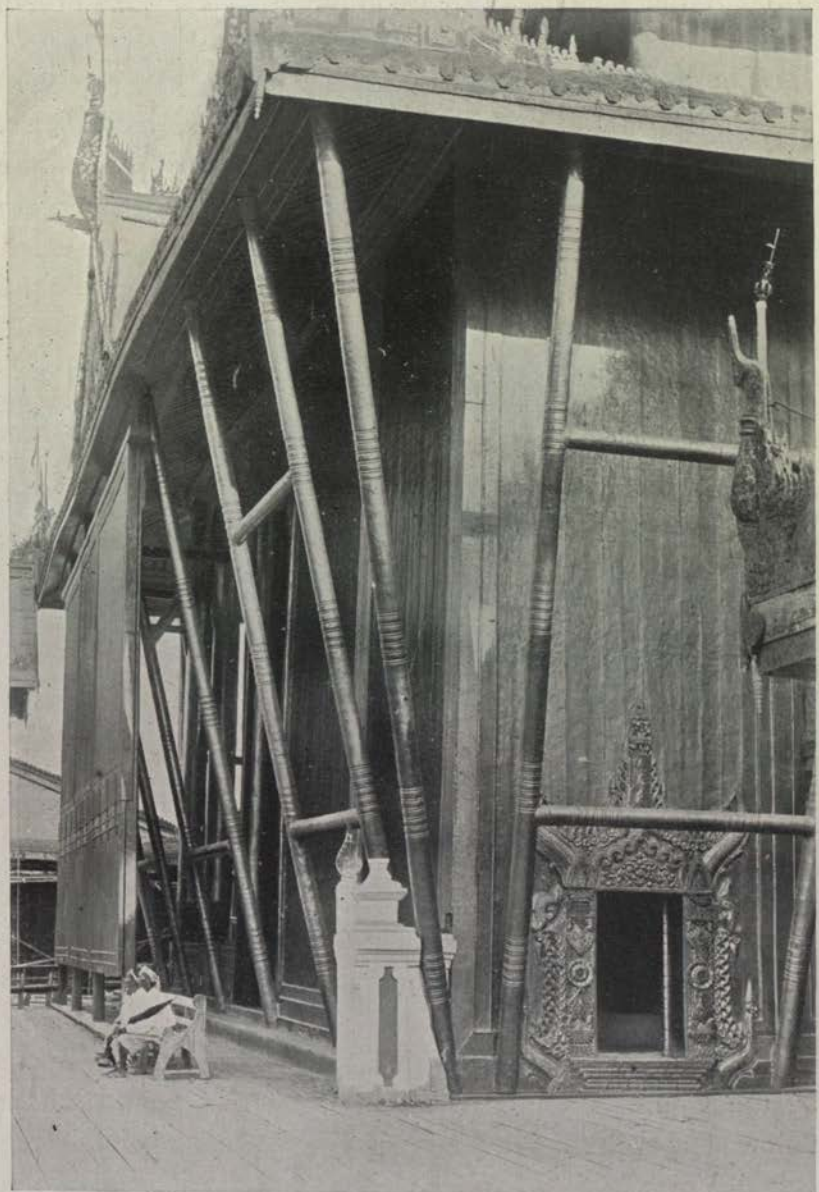
Entering then by the winged stairs guarded by monstrous guns, on which traces of the old gilding still survive, we find ourselves in the midst of a colonnade of golden pillars, which culminates in the great throne of the King. To the right and left similar colonnades stretch away, supporting a triple roof. Here we are at once upon the site of the most splendid, the most ceremonial portion of the palace.

Seated upon his Lion Throne, and lifted high above his prostrate people, the King of Burma here gave audience three times a year to feudatory princes and great Ministers of State and the members of the Royal Family. The spectacle, described by more than one eye-witness, was of extraordinary interest and splendour. Nearest of all to the throne, in a kind of cradle, there sat bent in homage the Heir-apparent. Behind him the Princes of the blood, and to right and left, amidst the golden pillars, the Ministers of State in purple and gold. The wings were crowded with lesser people. The sunlight swept in

From a painting by Saya Chone.

THE ROYAL AUDIENCE.

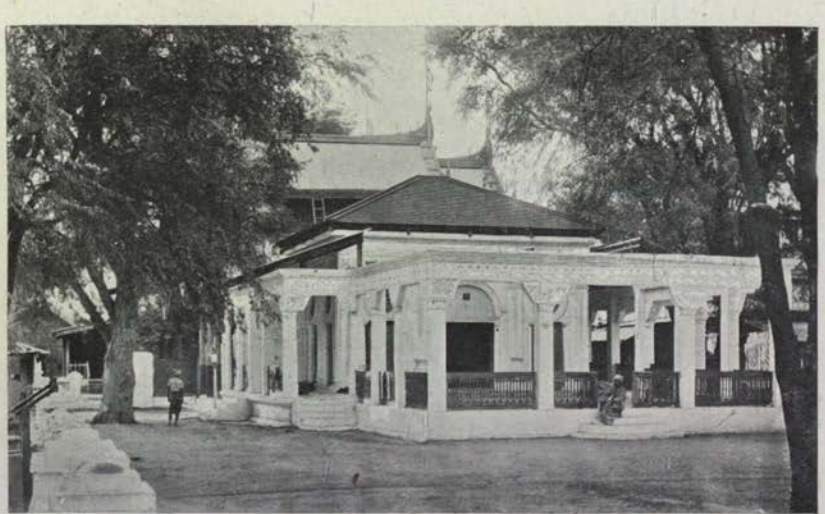
The Crown Prince in front; Feudatory Princes and Ministers behind.



SUNLIGHT AND GOLD

through the golden aisles upon the prostrate multitude, unrestrained by any walls.

The King's approach was announced by the sound of distant music, the marshalling of a guard of musketeers, and the sudden sliding back of the latticed doors of the throne, behind which his figure was seen slowly mounting a stair, under the burden of his jewelled coat and golden helmet. He was accompanied, as of right, by the chief



THE QUEEN'S TEA-ROOM

Queen, and of favour by one of his little daughters. Even upon the throne at the most solemn of royal ceremonies, the child, as children in Burma always are, was happily privileged.

The audience began with the chaunting of a hymn by the Court Brahmins, clad in white and gold. There followed a recitation by one of the "Messengers of the Royal Voice," of the Kings alms, and then each of the princes and noblemen assembled knelt down in homage

and renewed his allegiance to the King, and announced through an officer of the Court the presents he had brought to place before His Majesty. The further business of the day was then transacted according to the humour of the King.

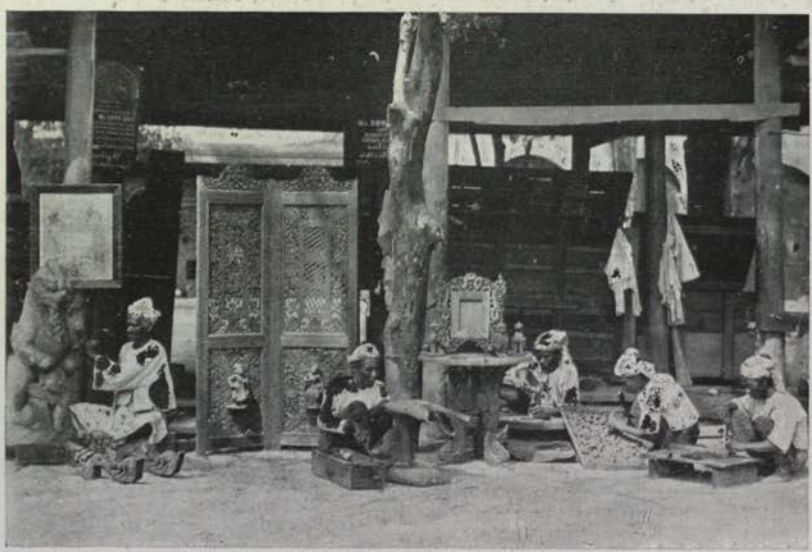
Tradition is so powerful at all Courts, and notably at all Eastern Courts, that it seems probable that the last King of Burma held his audience of his people in the great hall, much as his predecessors did fifteen hundred years before him. Certainly five hundred years ago the ceremony of reception cannot have been very different from that which has been described above, if we are to judge from the account of one, a prince of the blood royal, who made a presentation before his Sovereign.

THE LOOK-OUT TOWER

"At the time of the presentation," he writes, and the words are written upon stone, "the Heir-apparent knelt on the right side of the throne, Thonganbwa of Maw was on the left, and Thirizeyathu, the Governor of Taungdwin, was between them and in a line with them, while the Court officials were in their proper

places behind. His Majesty then commanded Naratheinga, a secretary, to approach, and, after having questioned him as to the particulars of the boon prayed for, granted it to the Governor and his wife, and to confirm the gift, poured out a cup of water and celebrated it by the beating of drums and cymbals."

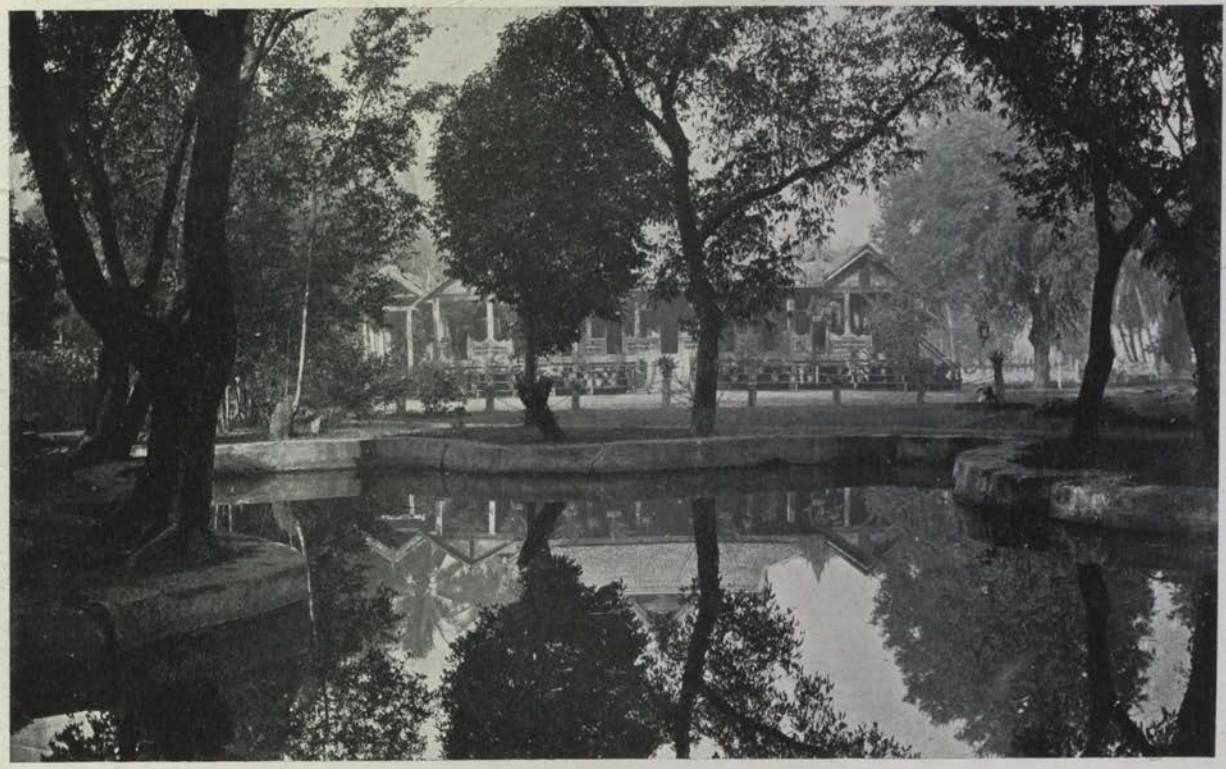
"When their Majesties were seated," observes an Ambassador of England, present three-quarters of a century



THE KING'S CARVER AT WORK

ago, "the resemblance of the scene which presented itself to the illusion of a well-got-up drama, forcibly occurred to us; but I may safely add, that no mimic exhibition could equal the splendour and pomp of the real scene."

Climbing up to the Lion Throne, with that license which has deprived the palace of its mystery, we see that it is curiously wrought with figures; and the strange designs on it, repeated again and again a thousand times



SCENE IN THE PALACE GARDENS (WHERE KING THIBAW ABDICATED)

in the monastic and royal architecture of the country, suggest conventional forms whose origin is lost in antiquity. There are those who scoff at the modernness of Mandalay, and inquire to what purpose a thing of half a century's growth is to be preserved, now that it no longer serves any necessary purpose. They forget that the palace, brought here from Amarapura, is from its perpetuation of tradition, its known fidelity to ancient models, of great age. To be convinced of this, one must walk over it in the company of a Minister of the King, or of some Elder versed in the lore of his country.

Here it is impossible to dwell upon details which go to show in what manner the ears of elephants, the thighs of deer, and the breasts of peacocks, each symbolic of something, have been incorporated into the conventional design of the throne. And even the purpose of the figures of *nats* about the throne, and on the golden latticed doors above it, is too abstruse to be dissected here. But we may note, as we descend the stairs from the throne, as the King of old did after his audience was over, that in a corner of the room behind it there is a small wooden structure like a dove-cote, reserved for the Mahagiri Nat, the Vulcan of Popa.

Above these two rooms and directly over the Lion Throne, rises the seven-roofed spire, which proclaims Mandalay the abode of a king. A narrow pillared corridor, called a *sanu*—in recollection of some bygone Palace of Pegu—leads to another chamber known as the Zeta-wun-zaung, or the Duck-Throne room, in which golden images of the King's ancestors were kept, and where he received Ambassadors at an informal audience.

A CORNER OF THE PALACE

"The scene of our reception," wrote one of these, "was the Je-da-woon-tshoung. It was a lofty room about forty or forty-five feet square, with very little ornament. The walls and pillars had originally been painted red, but were now dusty and cobwebbed. The floor was spread with carpets, and was crowded with dignitaries and petty officials of the Court, the latter all carrying large and handsome *dhas* in velvet or golden scabbards. Some twenty feet in front of where we took our seats was the King's sofa, a handsome specimen of the Burmese style of cabinet-making, in mosaic of gilding and looking-glass. It was spread with a handsome velvet mattress, yellow bordered with crimson, and a corresponding rug of crimson bordered with yellow was spread below for the regalia. These consisted of a fantastic gilded ornament, in size and shape much like a large pair of stag's antlers, festooned with a muslin scarf, and intended to receive the royal sword, and of the large golden Henza, set with precious stones, which stood on the throne, between their Majesties, on the public reception day. Other royal paraphernalia, such as the golden spittoon, the stand for the water-goblet, with its conical golden cover set with gems, etc., were brought in and deposited on the rug when His Majesty entered. We had waited probably twenty minutes when the expected music sounded from within, and the guardsmen entered, and dropt on their knees on either side. The doors in front of us were thrown open at the same time, and disclosed a long suite of gilded apartments, with the King, rather a short man, but muscular and well-proportioned, slowly pacing towards us, in rear of the attendants who bore the sword and other royal apparatus."

A SUMMER PAVILION OF QUEEN SUPAYA-LAT. THE PINK LOTUS IN BLOOM

Since the King was Mindon Min, the founder of Mandalay, it is interesting to know what he looked like.

"He has a clear and smooth skin, with a bright black eye which twinkles up into quite a Chinese obliquity when he laughs, and that he does every two minutes; his moustache is good, the throat and jaws very massive, the chest and arms remarkably well developed, and the hands clean and small. The retreating forehead, which marks him as a descendant of Alompra, was now very conspicuous, and I never saw this feature before in such singular excess."

The Alompra forehead is as famous in its way as the Bourbon nose, and to this day, any one in Burma with this particular type of physiognomy is described as having a "royal forehead."

To north and south of the Zeta-wun-zaung there were of old two buildings, one of which, the Bye-daik, contained the Elephant Throne, and was used as a council chamber by the Ministers of the Interior. Here the King sat when he made appointments of officers, or when officials were formally dismissed. The other, called the Chamber of the Snail Throne, was carved with the figures of shells, and was specially used when a warrant appointing an Heir-apparent had to be signed. At other times the King sat here when he received monks, and listened to their pious discourses. Both of these buildings have disappeared since the British occupation.

Through the Zeta-wun-zaung, another passage, known as the Nyi-la-gan-sanu, leads to the Baung-daw-zaung, the Crown or Glory room, in which the King held his daily

From a painting by Saya Chone.

KING THIBAW AND QUEEN SUPAYA-LAT LEAVING MANDALAY FOR EVER.

THE LOTUS GARDEN

audiences at eight o'clock in the morning, at three in the afternoon, and at seven in the evening. The morning audience was the most public and important, and all the officials of the city were obliged to attend. The afternoon audience was restricted to the officers and the affairs of the palace, and of an evening, the King conversed informally with the officers on duty.

The Royal Body-guard was lodged to right and left in the Myauk-da-we and Taung-da-we *zaungs*, both of which no longer exist. In the La-pet-ye and Shwé-daik *zaungs* there were lodged respectively the King's Pages of Honour and the Royal Treasury. In the latter, besides treasure, there were kept the Archives of the State. They were either burnt or destroyed, from pure wantonness, on the night of the occupation of Mandalay by the British army.

A few paces from the Treasury stand two masonry buildings, in a spacious court under the chequered shelter of great trees. Fate, which is sometimes kind, has of late years reserved this quiet and beautiful corner for one or two who, like the writer, go about on the State business, without any settled home of their own; and there is no fitter place from which to come to know something of the charm and spirit of this deserted palace. But of old, one of them was used as a kind of council chamber, and the other, painted with flower frescoes by some Italian artificer of the King, was used of summer afternoons as a place of recreation by the King and Queen. A fountain played here in the open court, and shrubs and flowers helped to ornament it. There are no flowers now, and the fountain has been plastered out of

THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN MONASTERY

existence; yet the place retains its charm.[1] Above it stands the wooden tower, built, like these two buildings, in the last days of the Burmese Court, and the tale runs that Queen Supaya-lat stood upon it, the tears in her eyes, looking for the advance of the British Flotilla, of whose coming she knew only from the talk of the children playing at its foot. She had been quite sure of success, and the Ministers feared to come before her with any tale but one of victory, although the knowledge of defeat was common property in Mandalay.

The summit of the tower, on which a watchman stands with an eye to fires in the city, commands a view of great variety and beauty.

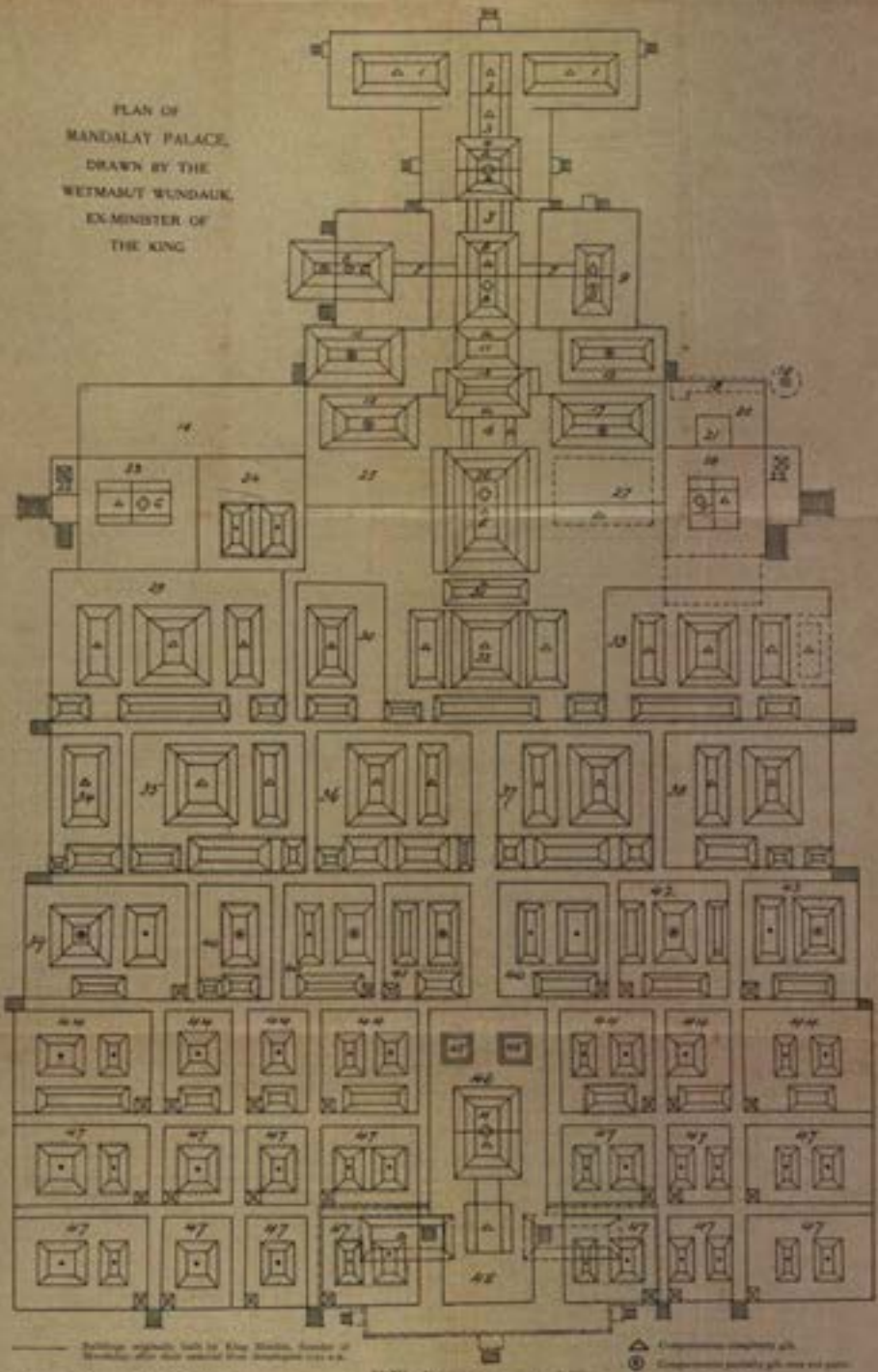
Returning to the main line of our travel, we enter, from the Audience Room, the Hman-nan-daw or Crystal Palace, which was the principal living-room of the King. To the north of it there is an open space, where formerly there stood the chamber in which King Mindon died. After his death it was transferred to the eastern gate of the Incomparable Pagoda, and converted into a monastery, which, as we have seen, still exists.

A little farther north is the Peacock Throne, where the King sat when elephants and horses were to be looked at, and on the south there is the Taung Samok Saung, in which the throne is sculptured with representations of deer. Near the throne-room is a masonry building much occupied by King Thibaw, and a pillared hall of glass mosaic and gold, whence the King and Queen were spectators of the Court theatricals below.

To follow in detail the arrangement of the palace

[1] Since these lines were written it has been converted into a Museum.

PLAN OF
MANDALAY PALACE,
DRAWN BY THE
WETMASUT WUNDAUK,
EX-MINISTER OF
THE KING



Buildings originally built by King Mindon, former of Mandalay, after whose material from Amarapura was used.

Additions made by King Thibaw.

Buildings demolished by the British Government.

KA-PU = An open-sided connecting two buildings.
SAMYE = An enclosure facing the Throne.

Compartments complete gilt.

Compartments partially gilt, now not gilt.

Building painted red.

Symbol of the Royal Throne.

Reference.	Name of Compartment.	Name of Throne.	Floor superintended.	Name of Wood used.	Remarks.
A	Hmat-san-gyan (hmat-san-gyi).	Thihathoo-na.	Low.	Ta-meza-ti (Lagerstroemia).	Here the King and the Chief Queen received Kathen Offerings from priests and laymen. Here the Royal Family assembled on the occasion of the beginning of the Rainy year in the month of Waso, the Waso Kathen in the beginning of Lent in Wazo, and the Waguin Kathen at the end of Lent in Thadingyut.
B	Pa-ka-nee-nyaing-daw.	Hsee-ha-tha-na.	Dark.	Thit-gan-ba (Pterocarpus indicus).	In this room hung the images of the Nyaik-pawmaw. It was also used for the reception of foreigners.
C	Kyit-daik-nyaing-daw.	Gaza-tha-na.	Kingdom.	Sa-ga-ma (Cassia).	This was occupied by Secretaries, the Ministers of the Interior. The King also sat here when there was occasion for the appointment of the Kingdoms, or Crown Princes.
D	Le-daw-nyaing-daw.	Thin-ka-tha-na.	Goldfish.	Pyin-ma-na (Jack Fruit).	Dr. King came here occasionally and received the pages (sons of Myowuns) called Lugee pi-daw.
E	Mine-nee-nyaing-daw gyi.	Pyatee-ya-tha-na.	Sea.	Kanazi (Mesua ferrea Linn.).	This was used when there was not yet set to be raised to the dignity of Chief Queen, and also when the marrying ceremony of the Royal daughters was taken.
F	Young-bauk-nyaing-daw.	Mi-gyi-tha-na.	Sea.	Ye-thi-ahmo (Vitex glabrata).	
G	Myauk-bauk-nyaing-daw.	Ma-ni-ya-tha-na.	Pheasant.	Kauk-ka-ma (Bombax).	Where presents of elephants were brought to him, the King sat here to accept them.
H	Amark-gan-daw-nyaing-daw.	Pa-da-ma-tha-na.	Lily.	Tha-ya-ba (Mangifera sp).	As in the Hlut-daw was passed the case of Great Audience Hall, the King and the Chief Queen received with members of the Royal family, Princes, Queens, and wives of Ministers of all ranks, who appeared before them on "beg pardon," at the end of Lent.

1. Mine-nee-daw.
2. Ma-hauthi-nyaing.
3. Ta-ma-nyaing.
4. Hmat-san-gyan (hmat-san-gyi).
5. Pa-ka-nee-nyaing-daw.
6. Pa-ka-nee-nyaing-daw.
7. Kyit-daik-nyaing.
8. Le-ma-nyaing.
9. Le-ma-nee-nyaing.
10. Le-daw-nyaing.
11. Myauk-daw-nyaing.
12. Kyi-ka-gan-ka-ra-nyaing.
13. Kyaung-daw-nyaing.
14. Young-daw-nyaing.
15. Hmat-Pyangan.
16. Le-gan-ga-nyaing.
17. Mine-nee-ka-ra-nyaing.
18. Royal Treasury: Royal Safe-nyaing.
19. Pyatee Assembly Room.
20. Hmat-Pyangan.
21. Ming Pyaphe.
22. Pyatee Building.
23. Unoccupied, added lately.
24. Hmat-Sauk-nyaing.
25. Kan-gan-daw.
26. Site of the Chamber in which King Mindon died.
27. Mine-nee-daw and Glass Palace.
28. Interior Chamber where the King retired daily.
29. Young-bauk-nyaing.
30. Building occupied by Queen Queen-ma.
31. Two long corridors called Le-thaik-ma-nyaing, occupied by King's daughters before the go-in.
32. Kan-ma-ka-ra-nyaing.
33. Six buildings occupied as Chief Queen.
34. King's audience compartment (E).
35. King's open Kandik Prince's chambers (G).
36. King's open Kandik Queen's compartments (G).
37. Eighteen Queen's chambers (G).
38. Western Queen's chambers (G).
39. King's open Kandik apartments and compartments (G).
40. Myauk-hmaing-daw Queen's chambers (G).
41. King's daughter's compartments (G).
42. Myauk-hmaing-daw Queen's compartments (G).
43. Young-bauk-daw Queen's chambers (G).
44. Young-daw-nyaing-daw Queen's chambers (G).
45. Buildings (E) occupied by Myo-ka-gyi (1) = Queens of middle rank.
46. Toilets.
47. Small Pavilion for re-occupation.
48. Buildings (E) occupied by Myo-ka-ma Nge or Queens of lowest rank.
49. Bauk-hmaing-nyaing.

interior beyond the Crystal Chamber is unnecessary. Let it suffice here to say that all to the west of it was occupied by the queens and princesses, and maids-of-honour in their degree. Last of all, and corresponding in a manner to the Great Hall of Audience on the east, is the Lily Throne-room of the Queen, where she and the King sat in state and received the homage of the ladies of the Court. It is a beautiful room with golden pillars of the finest teak in the country. For years it has housed with its audience halls the Upper Burma Club, while the Great Hall of Audience on the west has been used as a church.[1]

DRAGON (CARVED WOOD)

We have travelled

[1] Since these words were written the palace buildings have been renovated under the orders of the Government of India, and the Club is no longer housed, as it was, in the palace itself. Many of the minor buildings have been removed; the great spire, which was tottering to decay, has been rebuilt and overlaid with gold, and over the city walls new towers rise against the sky, as in the days of King Mindon when the city was first built.

now, as it were, through the husk of the old palace. But to know it vitally, we must of needs people it again with the figures of the past; with the figures of those who lived within it when there was a king in Mandalay. The task has been attempted more than once. The composite story, it may be, is still to come, but it is not for these pages.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE CITY

THE MEETING OF THE MYIT-NGÉ AND THE IRRAWADDY ATAVA

CHAPTER II

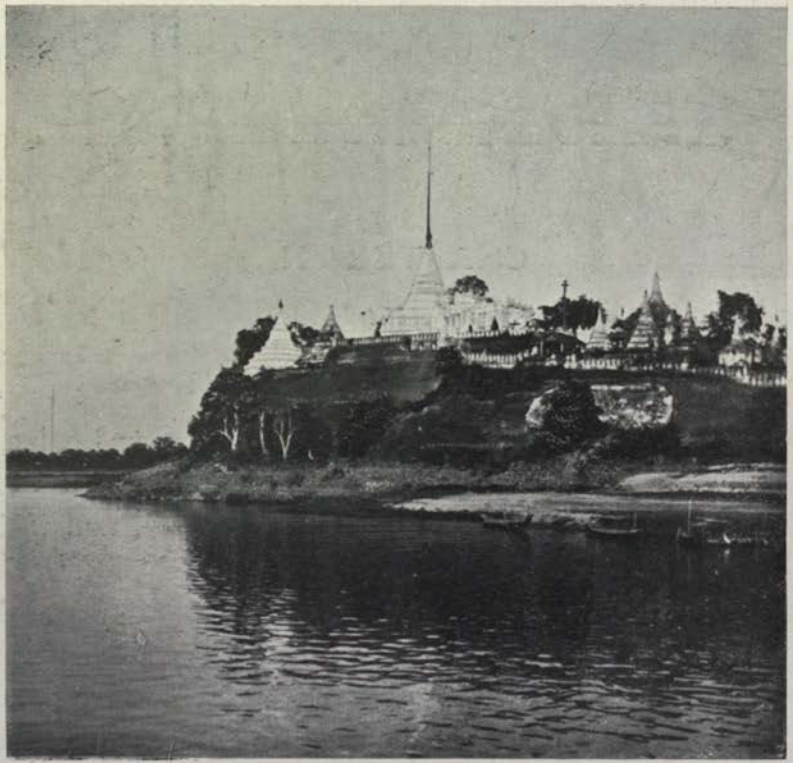
AVA

I. THE RUINS

The Queen

FROM Sagaing there is a ferry which lands one at the very gates of Ava. The river flows under the western wall, and if its near presence is fraught with destruction —it has swept away a portion of the palace—it adds not a little to the beauty of the site. There is no long and wearisome journey to be accomplished from the cool water to the red walls of the city, as at Mandalay. In the early dawn, as one crosses in the company of the village people or with a corporal's guard of fighting men from Sagaing, the river is a wonderful highway of lavender purple and ribbons of trembling light ; and the gaunt bare wrecks of the royal

steamers, sunk here in a belated effort to stay the advance of the British Flotilla, stand out in stark contrast with its face of eternal youth. On a little promontory which the first rise of the river speedily converts into an island, there are the ruins of brick buildings, which mark the



NEAR AVA

site of a pleasure-house of the kings of Ava. It must have been somewhere here, too, that Henry Burney lived.

The gate at which one enters now is called the Gate of the Charcoal Burners, from a vocation that is no longer pursued. Cattle and carts wait outside it; great trees

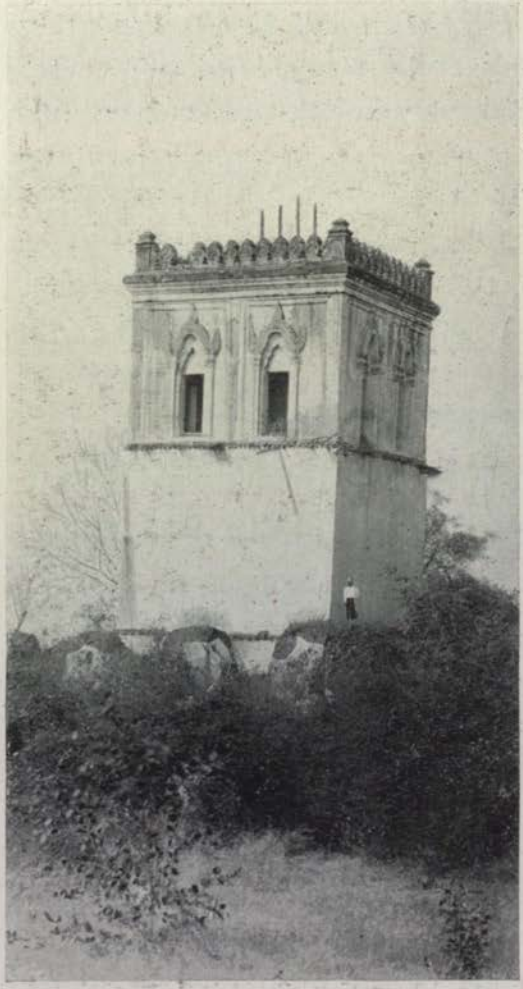
that have grown up since the days of the kings who abandoned Ava, spread their branches over the wall; and there is no one now to question such as enter in or go out of the royal city. A small hamlet has grown up within, enclosed in a thorn stockade with gateways at each end. There is an irony in its petty defences, here under the old wall, symbolical of the decline in the

ON THE FORESHORE OF THE RIVER

fortunes of this once famous city. Luxuriant roses before the cottages happily relieve these melancholy impressions. They flourish here in spite of the dust. On the left of the pathway, and parallel to it for some distance, runs the wall of the inner city. Beside it there is a moat of great width, dry now, but patterned like a meadow with yellow, satin-cupped flowers. It is spanned here by a causeway along which one may pass through a gap

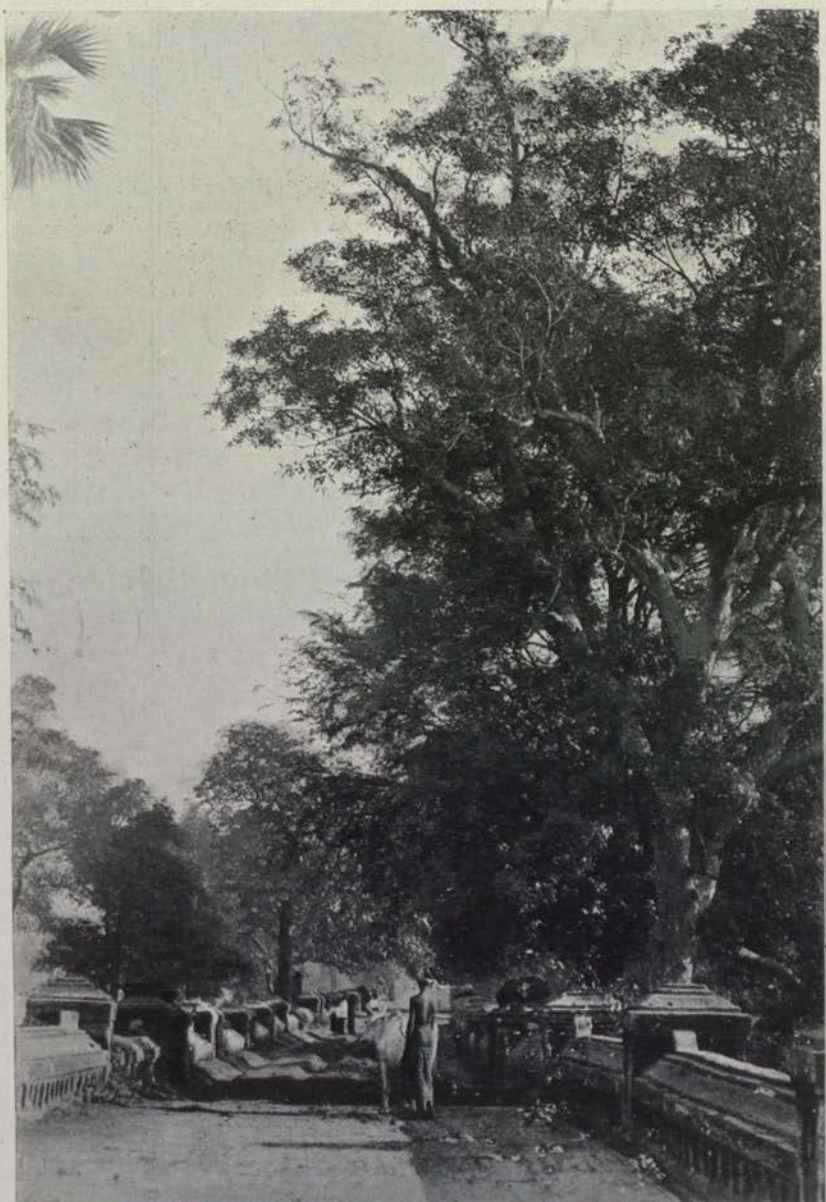
in the débris of the wall, once a royal spire-crowned gate, into the area of

THE PALACE



THE LEANING TOWER

Here there may be traced the inner wall and stockade, half buried under thorns. Of the palace of so many kings, little now remains. There is the Myin-nan, or look-out tower, a square campanile of fine masonry. The great earthquake of 1839, of which the memory is still fresh in the neighbourhood, shook it to its foundations and threw it out of the perpendicular. It has become a leaning tower, surrounded by broken masses of brick-work and dense undergrowth. A glimpse may be had from it of a fragment of the Royal Treasury, some little way to the west; and in its neighbourhood there are tanks of fine masonry and elegant proportions, with

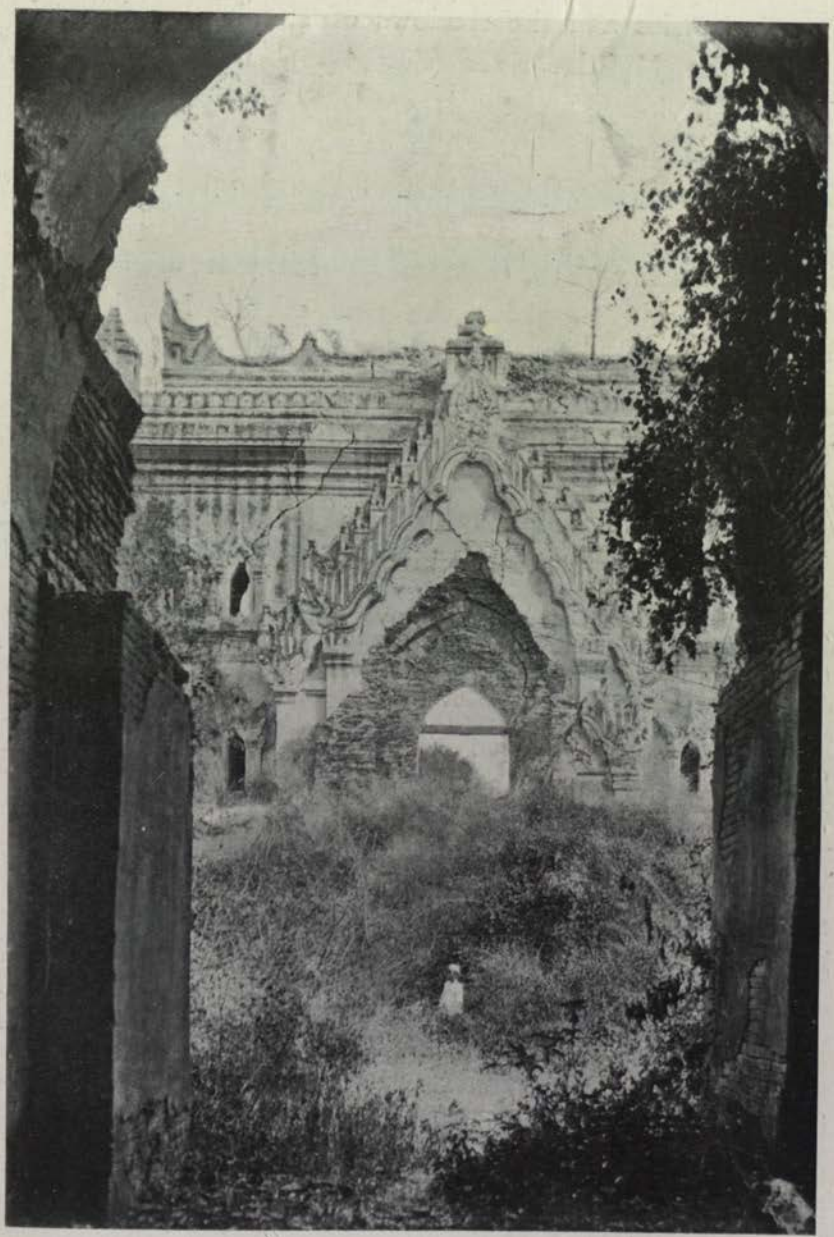


THE CAUSEWAY

terraces narrowing to the bottom, and flights of winged stairs. These are in good preservation, and they are still clothed in a wistful beauty that is in keeping with the general character of the place. Great trees lean over them, green, even at the driest season, with the freshness of spring. In their hollows lie the dead leaves of a past autumn. Near by are little circular pools of masonry made, say the village folk, for the small princes and princesses of Ava to splash about in.

And here it may be said, that of all the ruined capitals of Burma which make their appeal in behalf of the transitoriness of life, of the "Vanitas Vanitatum," the sense of which is deeply imbedded in the character of the people, Ava is the most gracious. Time has overlaid the scars of decay, and its ruins are less hurtful to the eye than those of Amarapura. There is a richness in its soil, a natural verdure, with the Irrawaddy and the Myit-ngé flowing under its walls, which save it from the desolation of Pagān. Long avenues of tamarinds encompass it with a suggestion that is at once homely and magnificent. Its moats are full of flowers, and they are lined at the western end with a procession of giant bombax trees, under which herds of cattle graze. Bridges of the picturesque past still cross the moat at intervals, and in the rainy season the risen waters of the Myit-ngé flow in and restore to them their ancient character. Even at seasons of dust and weariness there is a sylvan beauty in the great glades that fill the palace interior, which is not to be resisted.

From the Southern Gate of the city, a causeway of enormous length leads away across the fields, under the



THE LAY-DAT-GYI

tamarind aisles and the shadows of stately pagodas. It crosses the Myittha river (dug by a bygone king to link the Myit-ngé and the Irrawaddy) over a lofty wooden bridge, and for a long way the causeway itself is of wood, worn into ruts by the wheels of the passing carts. At the Tayok Chaung it is flanked by the turned wooden railings, which are the customary ornament of Burmese bridges; but throughout the rest of its length it is marshalled by parapets of masonry, designed with no little skill. Causeway and bridge, though worn and laden with dust, still serve a solid and useful purpose, and the name of the builder is still perpetuated in the memories of the people.[1]

Across them go the creaking wains, whose music is of

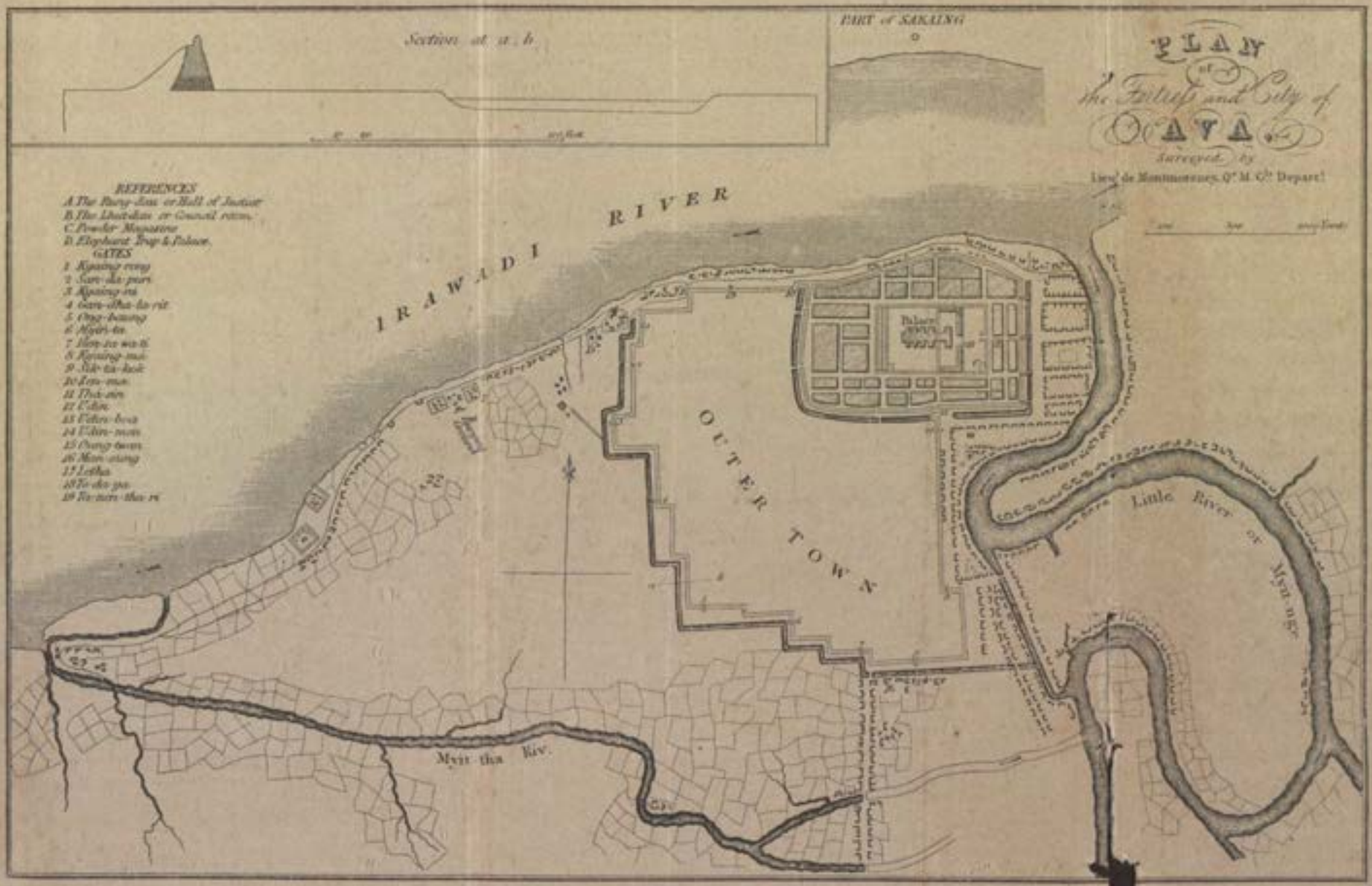
[1] At the Southern Gate of Ava there is an inscription on stone, which records the building of this, the Mahazeyapata Bridge, in the year 1822, by Maung O (a man of low origin who was raised to the highest station through the influence of his sister, wife of King Bagyi-daw) and his wife. Part of it runs as follows:—"The Prince and his wife and two daughters performed this meritorious deed in order that they might escape the miseries of the whirlpool of Samsaro, and in emulation of others who had for the same object founded various institutions. The bridge is situated on the South of the Capital. Its length is 500 tas, and it is so broad that four carriages can traverse it abreast. Along it and on both sides are built resting places. At the Southern end of the bridge are two leo-gryphs, and at the Northern end is built a large hostel for the convenience of wayfarers. The whole work was completed on Friday evening, the sixth waxing of Tabodwe 1184 Sakkaraj, corresponding with the era of the Religion 2366, at a total expenditure of 1,000 viss of silver. It was not for love of praise and worldly fame that the Prince erected this grand bridge named Mahazeyapata, but simply to acquire merit towards the attainment of Nirvana." Whether the builders escaped the miseries of Samsaro or not, it is certain that in this life bitterness was their portion. Upon the accession to the throne of King Tharrawaddi, the Prince was carried about a prisoner in chains, while his daughters, innocent of any crime but pride, were reduced to begging in the streets. The elder of the two, to whom one of the new King's sons had once been a rejected suitor, was subjected, by the royal command, to worse indignities; and the Prince himself, after two years of humiliation, came by a shocking and violent death.

A MODERN PAGODA AT AVA

infinite leisure and long days; the tasselled ponies; the humble people of the countryside. On the threshing-floors beside them, the unmuzzled ox treads out his tale of corn, the wayside caterer frizzles his dainties in bubbling pools of oil, the small cigar-seller keeps her little store, and an eye on the passing youth. There is the charm about bridge and causeway that is begotten only of long usage. Built in a bygone day, when Ava was the capital of an empire, they have grown into the lives and habits of the people. The great trees that fling their passages of shade across them, competing with the broad glare of the moon; the mellow tones of the parapets; the silky greys of the turned balustrades, have come only by the grace of Time. With all their shortcomings, there is nothing English in Burma that can hope to rival even such things as this bridge and causeway these hundred years to come. For we are a new people here, and we are careless—too careless—of all but use.

The village of Tada-oo, at the far end of this causeway, is now the administrative centre of the neighbourhood. A Burmese magistrate resides there, and of late years a wooden Court House, a Police Station, and a small rest-house for official travellers have been built by the side of the dusty road. The white Say-o-bo Pagoda, built by a pious rich man—the parable of the rich man is of no application in Burma—faces it across the way, and its glare is unbearable by day; but its beauty is great at night, when it stands out under the silvery moonlight, cut clear against the violet sky.

The most conspicuous building of old Ava that survives is the Lay-dat-gyi Pagoda, a square and many-windowed



Reproduced from *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in the year 1827*, by JOHN CRAWFURD, Esq., F.R.S., F.L.S., F.G.S., etc., late Envoy. London, 1829

edifice, mightily shaken by the earthquake of 1839. Each of its four façades is taken up with a colossal doorway, pointed arch within, and elaborate tracery without, of lions and alligators culminating in a panel set with the figure

THE ZAYAT AND THE VILLAGE HEADMEN

of the Thagya-min. The plaster is superior to all the crude work done now, and even to the finer work, with its delicate lacework tracery tricked out with little painted figures, of which a recent example confronts it over the

way. The courtyard walls of this building run parallel on the south with the parapet of the causeway, which they greatly surpass in height. A great builder was at work when this pagoda was designed, and one can only regret the lack of continuity, which has prevented these gifted people from carrying on to its splendid conclusion the architectural impulse of Pagān.

And now, if you will come with me, skirting the walls of Ava, we will pitch our camp for the night in a *zayat* that some good man in the past has provided for travellers like ourselves on the banks of the curving Myit-ngé. The half-moon, as we dine, passes slowly to the west, leaving the sky behind her a luminous violet set with golden stars. The air is cool, the night perfect. We have dropped by happy choice into a new climate. For such nights are rare in Upper Burma in the last days of March.

The *zayat* has an open balcony before it, protected by tall posts and panels of turned rails. The soaring heads and backs of great gryphons rise up between us and the river. Dust and noise have vanished from the world. On the floor the headmen of two neighbouring villages sit with us, smoking in such fellowship between white man and brown man as is possible only in Burma. It is possible for one reason—because the old-world Burman, wherever one meets him, is at heart a gentleman.

A mackerel sky of little clouds painted with iridescent beauty wakes us with the dawn. For an hour or more we lie abed, seized with the sheer joy of it, and the monstrous heads of the gryphons before our sleeping-place protect us from the straight rays of the climbing

A BURMESE MINISTER AND FAMILY

sun. Then we embark upon the river, here making its last great curve under the walls of Ava, before it is lost in the Irrawaddy; and the headmen, early afoot to see us off, bow as the boat pushes off, courteous to the last.

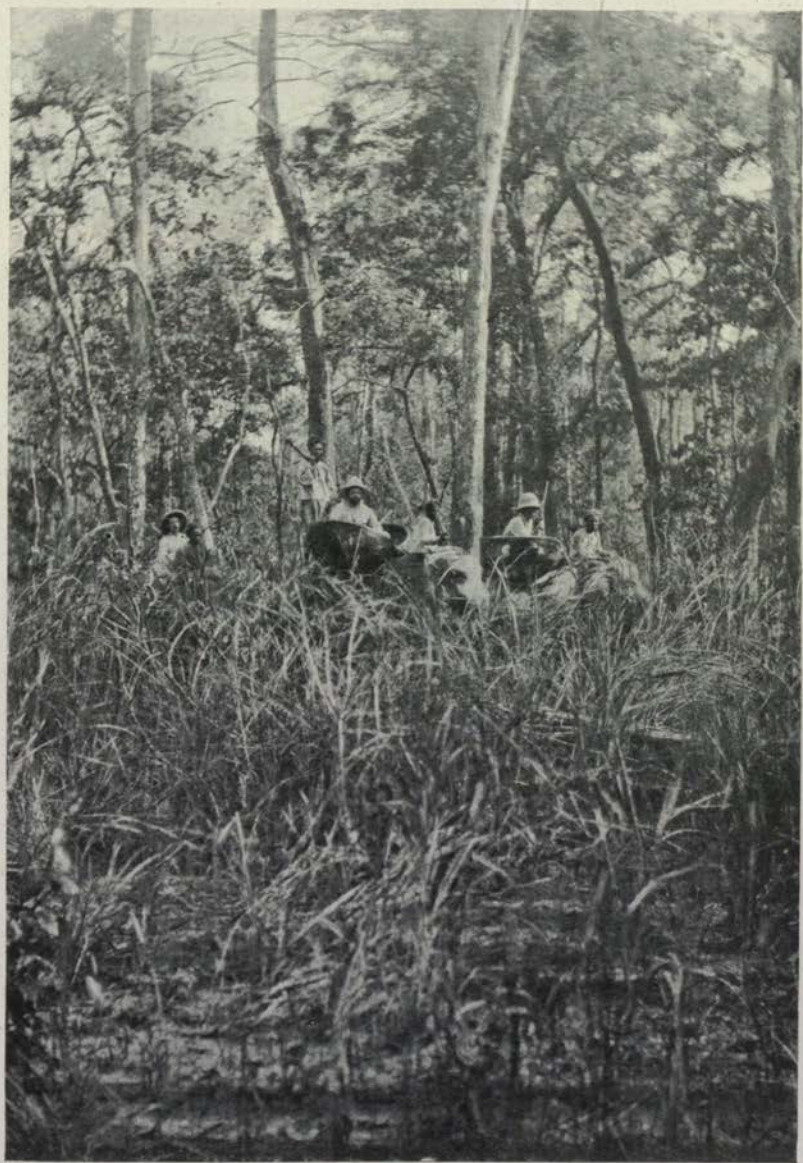
At this season a sweeping shoulder of land is exposed between the actual basin of the river and the walls of the city. It is alluvial soil of the richest, and it is laid out here in fields of vigorous tobacco. The view is of great charm, beautiful under the most difficult conditions. There are first the crinkled fields, blowing with pink scented blossoms, then the rivers meeting at a sharp angle, and last of all, in the distance, the white pinnacles and blue masses of the Sagaing hills faintly outlined in the misty air.

And here while the steamer that is to bear us down the river is still shrieking her way into Sagaing, while the trains on the Amarapura shore roar amidst the ruins of the deserted city, and steel hawsers hauling trucks make their agonised protest to the morning, let us walk a little way under the walls of Ava and consider what its past has been.

II. THE PAST

Ratanapura, the City of Gems, Inwa or Ava, the Fish-pond; such are the varying titles by which this city that was a capital for four and a half centuries is known to Burmese history, and of these the Fish-pond long preceded the City of Gems.

When one looks at the map of Burma, he is not so much disposed to inquire why a capital city was placed



ELEPHANTS IN KHINE GRASS (SOON AFTER THIRD BURMESE WAR)

here, as the reason why it was ever removed. For Ava stands in the great mid-land of Burma, where the wide valley leaves space for the growth of a people, and its actual site, served by the majestic Irrawaddy, the winding Myit-ngé, the deep and rapid Myittha, seems to offer every advantage of beauty and peace that a city-builder could desire. Nowhere indeed, in Burma, does one regret more sharply the operation of that instinct of migration which has so often, and so often without reason, provided Burma with a new-found capital.

The origin of Ava, the true birth of the City of Gems, lies in the death-agony of Pagān. In the year of our Lord 1284, Pagān, the capital of a thousand years, fell before a Mongol invasion, and its king fled away to the shelter of the Delta. And though amidst the splendid monuments of the great city his successors continued for a season to maintain a surface state, the glory of Pagān was accomplished, and Power betook herself to other centres of life. The Burmese race lay broken and exhausted, and its ancient rivals, the Shan and the Môn, rose up to independence, and even to ascendency. In the south the Môn re-established their power at Pegu, and in the north the Shan made kingdoms for themselves at Panya and Sagaing. For some fifty years these cities of the Shan flourished, leaving traces to this day of their momentary greatness, and then there arose one who claimed to combine the blood-royal of Tagoung and Sagaing. Seized with a great ambition, he sought to revive the Empire by founding Ava in the year 1364. Within four years he died, but his ambition lived after him, flaming intermittently at

From a painting by J. R. Middleton.

WAITING FOR THE STEAMER ON THE BANKS OF THE IRRAWADDY.

Ava, bursting into splendour at Taung-u and Pegu, but reaching some measure of permanency only under the Alompra kings.

His immediate successor, a descendant of the King of Pagān, established the power of Ava as far as Prome, and invaded Pegu. The following years are but a record of this struggle with the southern Môn, punctuated, to

ON THE FERRY

the detriment of Ava, with attacks from the north by the Shan and the Chinese (1422 A.D.).

By the middle of the sixteenth century a strange transformation, of which the record is given in the history of Pegu, resulted in the succession of a Burmese prince, the famous Branginoco, to the throne of Pegu, and the advent of the Portuguese drew the balance of power away from Ava to the seaboard. In 1554 Branginoco, with

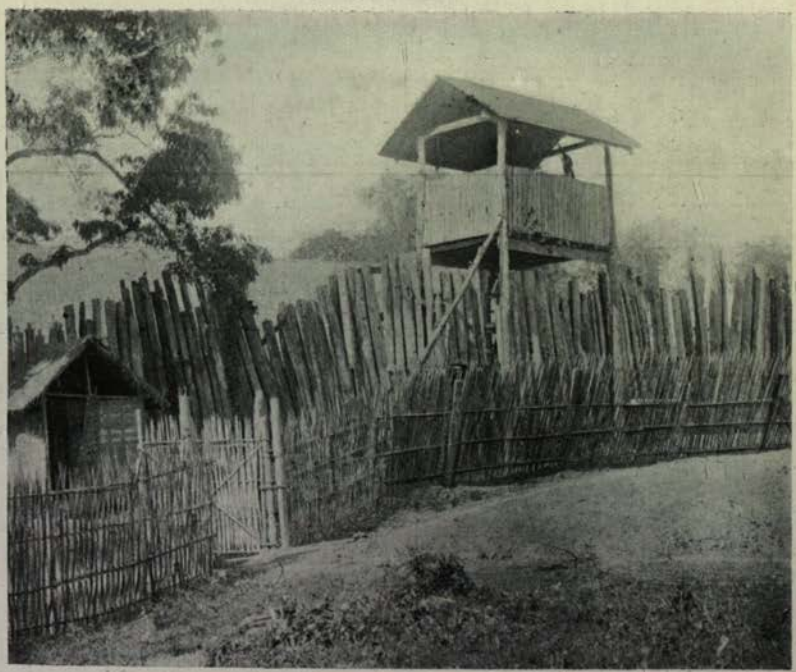
a great army and Portuguese auxiliaries, stormed the city of Ava and broke the power of the Shan. A Burmese prince was placed upon the throne as a tributary of the Empire. It was not till 1636 that Ava became, for the first time in its history, the Imperial capital. The king, Thado Dhamma, who raised it to this dignity, built, in commemoration of the event, the Kaung-hmu-daw Pagoda, whose massive bulk still towers above the river on the Sagaing shore.

But the power of its kings declined, and even the small state of Manipur humiliated them by annexing a portion of their dominions. The tide of invasion flowed to the very gates of the Kaung-hmu-daw Pagoda, where to this day the marks of the Manipuri swordsmen are pointed out upon the lintel. In the south the Môn rose once more with a success that was as stupendous as it was brief. The city of Ava was taken and destroyed, and its king, the last scion of the dynasty of Pagān, was carried away in bondage to Pegu. A Môn governor ruled in his place.

Five short years elapsed, and then, by a still more extraordinary *bouleversement*, the village headman, Alompra, found himself undisputed Emperor of Burma, and the power of the Môn race was broken for ever.

Alompra fixed his capital at Shwébo, the place of his birth, and it was not till the year 1764 that his son, the Emperor Sin-byu-shin, established himself at Ava. The city was rebuilt, a splendid palace was erected, and for the space of seventeen years it remained the capital of the Empire. In these years the impetus given by Alompra continued unchecked. Manipur was overrun by the

Burmese, Siam was invaded and its capital destroyed, and successive invasions from China were brilliantly repulsed. Then once more there was a migration, the history of which is bound up with the rise of Amarapura, and Ava desolate again, lapsed for a season (1783-1819) from her chequered greatness.



STOCKADE AND SENTRY-BOX (THIRD BURMESE WAR)

AVA RESTORED

1819-1837

On the death of Bo-daw-paya (see Amarapura) his grandson the Prince of Pagān ascended the throne as Bagyi-daw. For reasons that were almost solely capricious, the new monarch resolved to abandon his grandfather's capital

and restore the departed glories of Ava. The new lease thus given to the ancient capital was coincident with a fatal decline in the prosperity of the Empire. For whereas at the outset of his reign the Emperor Bagyi-daw ruled over the whole of Burma and added to this vast territory by the conquest of Assam, he lost within a few years by his disastrous war with the British, nearly the whole of his seaboard, and all that his armies had won of Assam and Manipur. His private fortune sustained as great an eclipse. His grandfather, a careful and almost an avaricious man, had accumulated during his long reign a treasure of over four million rupees. The whole of this considerable fortune was rapidly spent by the new monarch in the removal of his capital, in the building of extensive but ephemeral palaces and temples, and in his unfortunate war (the first) with the British.

There is no lack of material for a history of his reign, or for, what is more relevant to this narrative, a picture of life and manners at his Court. Soon after he came to the throne there appeared at Ava the Rev. Adoniram Judson and his wife, and the history of their troubles and the letters of Mrs. Judson throw a vivid light upon the pride and the fear, the splendour and the humiliation, which prevailed at Ava during and before the war. On the British frontier and in the Council Chamber at Calcutta, dense ignorance prevailed of the character and intentions of the Burmese Court: yet there were present there, as traders, missionaries, and servants of the King, some who could have thrown a clear light upon all that was afoot.

One of these strangers arrived at the very moment

THE SURRENDER AT AVA (THIRD BURMESE WAR, 1885–7)

when the capital was in transition, and his narrative paints an almost Arcadian picture of life at the Burmese Court before the war. The new King, a man of thirty-five years of age, was of a playful, affable, and withal a kindly disposition. He was of dark complexion, and in person small and slender. He was mentally incapable of any continuous effort, but his physical activity was remarkable, and scarcely a day passed that he did not go on the river, or ride on horseback or on an elephant. He was partial to Europeans, and showed much kindness to those of them who came before him. It was to this partiality that those who were prisoners at Ava during the war owed their lives, at a time when the State policy would have consigned them to a swift and barbarous death. Boyish almost in his ways, good-natured, generous, and indolent, he might, so far as his own character led him, have lived happily and at peace with his neighbours. But the influences of his Court and of the times were against him. He was deeply attached to his wife Nanma-daw Me-nu, a woman of low origin and without much personal beauty, but of an imperious and commanding nature. The most influential man at Court was her so-called brother Mintha-gyi Maung O (the Bridge-Builder), a man haughty, reserved, and unapproachable, cruel and rapacious. Next after him in influence was the Maha Bandula, a general who had risen rapidly to distinction by his conquest of Assam.

The instincts of all these proud and ambitious people lay in the direction of war, and the national spirit, roused by success, was driving hard to the same goal. The British were regarded as a parcel of merchants

under the rule of a nondescript Company represented by a Governor of no power or influence, who had the arrogance to communicate with kings. The European army was considered to be small and effete, incapable of facing the hardships of a Burmese campaign, and

MOUNTED INFANTRY, 1885–7

too luxurious to encounter the Burmese soldier in his native jungles. Its method of advancing to battle to the sound of drums and trumpets was regarded as particularly foolish, and its habit of exposing itself in the open as even more so. The Native Indian Army was regarded with pure contempt. Hard fortune has taught

the Burmese spirit respect for the white man, but over the "black man," as he labels the native of India, he still cherishes a deep conviction of superiority. At the time of the war this conviction was absolute. Coupled with this general feeling of contempt for the British power went in the Burmese mind a deep resentment at its territorial growth. The English, so ran the feeling of the Court, were the inhabitants of a small and remote island. What business had they to come in ships from so great a distance to dethrone kings and to take possession of countries they had no right to? They contrived to conquer and govern the black strangers with caste, who had puny frames and no courage. They had never yet fought with so strong and brave a people as the Burmese. And it is related that the King on seeing a map prepared for him at his accession, said with evident annoyance: "You have assigned the English too much; the territory of the strangers is unreasonably large."

Moreover there had been for years a frontier question between the two countries; we had sheltered many thousands of refugees from Aracan, and had refused the impatient demands of the Burmese Court for their extradition. We had indeed done worse, for we had permitted them to wage an unlawful war against their late sovereign. This trouble had somewhat lessened since the death of the chief rebel, Chin-ba-yin, known to the British public of the day as "King Berring," but the memory of it still rankled; and fresh troubles arose on the Assam border. The policy of the Government of India lacked consistency, it lacked firmness, and it left an unfavourable impression upon the Burmese Court. Women play a great part in

AVA REDOUBT AFTER CAPTURE, 1885

the affairs of life in Burma, and it was left to the King's sister to sum up the popular opinion. "The English," she observed, "are obviously afraid. Their conduct on the frontier is mean and cowardly; they are always disposed to treat and not to fight. We shall now fight them, and shall no longer be dissuaded. The new Governor-General is a fool; he is afraid of us and attempts to coax us, yet he continues the usual course of aggression and encroachment." Nor was it, on the Burmese part, to be any mere campaign of defence. Territorial grandeurs dazzled the Burmese imagination. Dacca and Murshidabad were to be added to the Empire of Ava, and the wretched Governor-General was to be led about the streets of the royal capital in golden chains. Among these vain and truculent people, the King alone seems to have been doubtful of the future. He liked his Englishmen; he liked knocking their hats off, and pulling their hair, and cracking jokes with them. The prospect of war was of doubtful attraction to his easy mind, and in the troubled days that came upon him he deeply regretted it. He made the somewhat ludicrous observation to his Portuguese sword-bearer, that he was in the predicament of a man who had got hold of a tiger by the tail, which it was neither safe to hold nor to let go!

We may turn for a moment to consider the state of Ava at this period. Since the year 1783 it had lain untenanted, and even in the year 1796, in the thirteenth year of its abandonment, Colonel Symes, the Envoy, noted how swiftly it had fallen into decay:

"The walls are now mouldering into decay; ivy clings

A ROYAL BARGE

to the sides, and bushes suffered to grow at the bottom undermine the foundation, and have already caused large chasms in the different faces of the fort. The materials of the houses, consisting chiefly of wood, have been transported to Amarapura, but the ground still retains traces of former buildings and streets. The lines of the royal palace, of the Hlut-daw, the spot on which the Piasath or imperial spire had stood, were pointed out to us by our guide. Clumps of bamboos, a few plantain trees, and tall thorns occupy the greater part of the area of this lately flourishing capital. We observed two dwelling-houses of brick. . . . On entering one we found it inhabited only by bats, which flew in our faces. Numerous temples were dilapidating by time. It is impossible to draw a more striking picture of desolation and ruin."

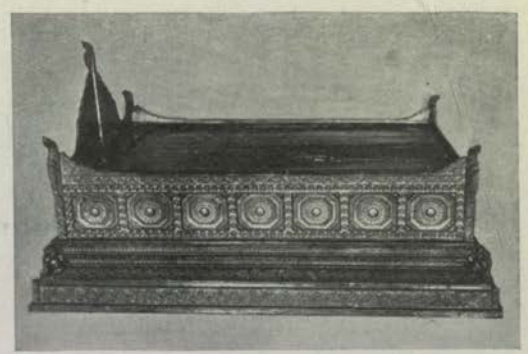
Twenty-three years more of this travail passed over the abandoned city before Bagyi-daw resolved to restore it.

"When I arrived at Amarapura," wrote one of his English friends, "the King had just resolved to abandon his stately palace and to build a new one on the site of the ancient city of Ava. The nobles were glad of the opportunities the migration offered of adding to their fortunes, but it was melancholy to see the poorer classes breaking up their old habitations and seeking new ones at great cost and labour. The new palace was nearing completion, and the golden *htee* had just been placed over the "Centre of the Universe"—the Lion Throne—when a thunderstorm broke over the new city, and the sacred pinnacle was overturned. This ominous portent filled the King with ungovernable anger. The wretched architect was hunted up and dragged to the place of execution, the

King ejaculating every few moments, 'Is he dead? Is he dead?' The executioner offered to stay the blow till sunset to give time for a reprieve, but the dejected architect, now almost as mad as his master, refused the boon, and insisted on his performing his office instantly. He complied, and the reprieve arrived too late."

In this fashion was Ava, for the last time in its history, raised to the pride of place!

Outside the city the King and his people took their pleasure at the great elephant trainings, when the wild herds of the Shan hills were driven and cajoled into the enclosure destined as their place of torment. The Elephant Palace was a mile below the town, on the edge of the Irrawaddy. It was a great square enclosed in a double palisade of teak, each beam of which was equal to the mainmast of a ship. Between the palisades there was a wall of masonry fourteen feet high and twenty feet thick, upon which many thousands of spectators assembled. A special palace was erected here for the King, who came mounted upon a superb elephant, which he guided himself with a golden and jewelled goad. Upon such occasions he was accompanied by the princes of the blood and the great Ministers of State, and was escorted by several hundred musketeers and spearmen. But no women ever



KING'S THRONE

attended the spectacle. The King owned a thousand elephants, of whom the males were thoroughly broken to service; the females were kept in a half wild state on the borders of the elephant forests, where they were visited by their wild neighbours. When in this way a male from the forest came amongst them, the herd with its enamoured visitor was slowly driven into Ava, and there in the presence of the populace he was artfully driven into the palisade. Distracted by his fears and his doubts, led by one instinct to retreat to the shelter of his native forest, driven by another still more powerful to enter the fatal enclosure, he made a very pleasant holiday for the people of Ava. Once within, he was abandoned by the females who had led him in, and maddened and fatigued by the matadors who were there to complete his humiliation.

The populace looked on with breathless interest; the captive spent himself with rage. Sometimes one of his enemies fell, and he reeked an instant revenge by crushing him to a pulp; at others the goaded beast himself fell dead of anger and exhaustion while yet in the arena; but for the most part his ineffectual struggle ended in his being lassoed and led off to a long and close captivity of half a year or more, at the end of which period, his spirit broken for ever, he was added to the disciplined elephantery of the King.

Another of the great spectacles of Ava was the Water Festival held upon the river at the turn of the year, when its waters begin to fall. To this the King and Queen came in the royal barge, a magnificent object with a spire thirty feet high, and overlaid with gold. The princes

and courtiers similarly came in golden boats, and upon the river for three days the war-boats of the King, and the boats of nobles and courtiers, raced each other, to the lively songs of the rowers. The very oars of the royal boats were gilded, and as the boats circled the spray flew from their blades, and the sun blazed upon their magnificence. On the evening of the third day the festival ended to the sound of cannon, as the royal barge moved in procession through the assembled boats.

KING'S HOWDAH

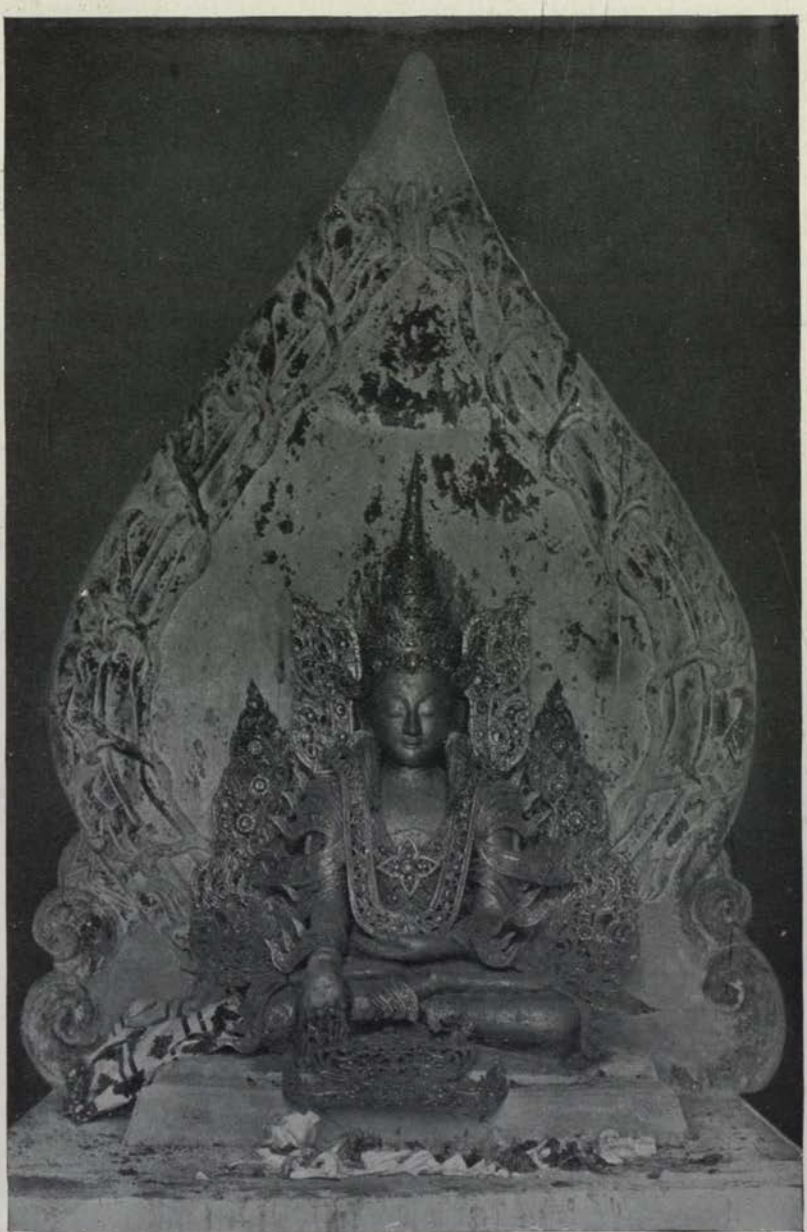
"The setting sun," wrote the British Envoy of the day, "shone brilliantly upon a profusion of barbaric gold, and the pageant was altogether the most splendid and imposing which I had ever seen."

Upon stated days the King received at the palace in the time-honoured manner of the Burmese kings. He climbed through golden doors and corridors within to the Lion Throne, and before him, below, amidst the aisles of golden pillars, each in its day the pride of some distant forest, there lay bent in homage the princes of the blood, and all the courtiers and nobles

and feudatories of the realm. It was a great spectacle, which any one who enters the throne-room of the still surviving palace of Mandalay can picture for himself.

The life of Ava was in fact the life of Pagān, of Pegu, of Amarapura, of Mandalay. The palace was the focus of the land; the centre of the Burmese world. The monarch was the absolute ruler over all his people. Their lives and possessions, with some reservations of religion, were wholly at his disposal. There was no aristocracy, no class of hereditary nobles. The seller of fish might reasonably hope to climb to the place of Prime Minister; the great Officer of State knew that the royal will might reduce him at any hour to obscurity. It was a little failing of the kings of Ava to scatter their courtiers in flight by flinging a spear amongst them in any sudden access of wrath; and the most serene, dignified, and accomplished gentleman of the realm might find himself punished in a moment with ludicrous ignominy. Thus the Prime Minister for some peccadillo would be spread-eagled in the sun, or a whole bevy of nobles would find themselves loaded with three pairs of irons for some lapse of punctilio.

The Burmese in the year 1820 were, as they are still, a nation of children; very clever be it said, superior to many of the races with whom they were in contact; possessed, indeed, of the rudiments of great qualities: spiritual feeling, artistic capacity, courage, dignity, self-confidence, national pride; but children withal. Their military system, their revenue system, their organisation of commerce, of justice, of all that goes to make up



THE SERENITY OF CONTEMPLATION

the strong and lasting life of a nation, were undeveloped; and the King—who could attend to nothing for more than twenty minutes at a time, who delighted in practical jokes with his favourites and rode upon the back of a man known as "the Royal Steed," and delighted in a water-palace shaped like a winged dragon, and withal bore himself upon occasion with pride and great dignity, and held himself master of the universe, was but typical of his people, then as now, charming, attractive, delightful, with the great gift of youth—the Future—still before them.

BURMESE WOOD-CARVING

The war with the British saddened and humiliated the King. The loss of half his Empire, the ignominy destined for ever to be associated with his reign, the strain upon his private wealth, all these things reacted upon his character. The gay, genial prince grew sullen and morose as the years passed; the latent insanity of his race developed—until in the year 1837, but eighteen years after the restoration of Ava, he ceased to be King, and his brother ruled in his place. The days of Ava were numbered, and with the return of the Court to Amarapura, it lapsed for ever from its pride of place.

VIEW OF AMARAPURA FROM SAGAING

CHAPTER III

I. AMARAPURA, "THE IMMORTAL"

"Amarapura, the great and flourishing Golden City, illumined and illuminating, lasting as the Firmament, and embellished with Gold, Silver, Pearls, Agate and the nine original stones; the Golden Throne, the seat of splendour whence the royal mandate issues and protects mankind."—THE KING OF AVA TO THE VICEROY OF INDIA.

The Crown Prince

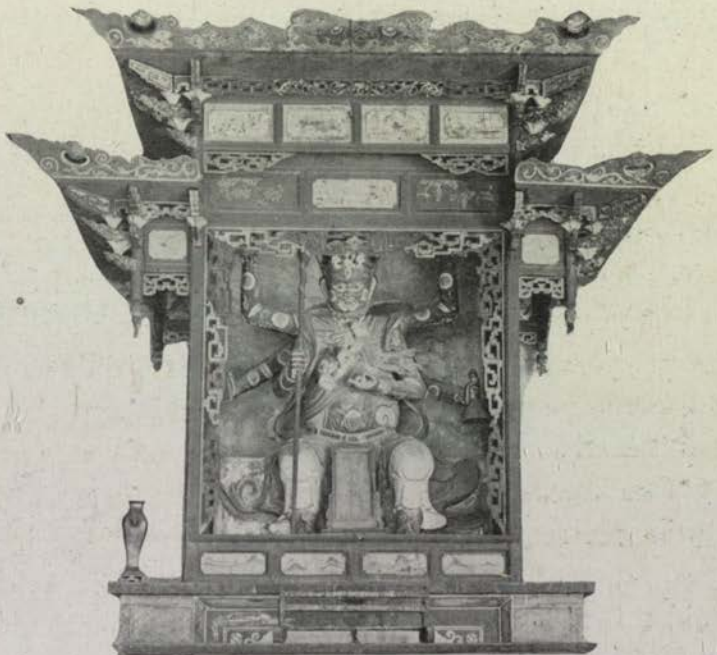
THE road from Mandalay after it leaves the Aracan Pagoda is that same road of which Yule tells, trodden by throngs of silken worshippers in the days when Amarapura, "the Immortal," was the royal city. Hoary tamarinds throw their shadows over it from the east, and on the west an embankment protects it from the Shwé-ta-chaung and the flood-waters of the Irrawaddy. Farthest of all on the west rise the Sagaing hills. Even at seasons of dust and drought, the space

between the embankment and the river is green and refreshing to look upon. Somewhere on its wide expanse

THE JOSS-HOUSE

the kings of Ava built their summer-house and water-palace, overlooking the river.

At the Sanda-Muni Pagoda, girt with a four-square row of chapels, from each of which the marble image has been stolen, the highway enters the palace fortress of Amarapura. No great gates open now to yield the traveller passage; no gilded *pya-o* throws overhead a momentary shelter from the sun. The waters of the moat are



INSIDE THE CHINESE JOSS-HOUSE

dried up, the pink lotus has long since ceased to bloom, and the bed of the moat is furrowed by the plough. A low cactus-hidden line of rubble is all that survives of the crenellated walls. Passing on by decaying pagodas and masses of crumbling masonry, the dusty thoroughfare cuts off an angle of the city and recrosses the moat. A little farther and it brings the traveller to the rest-house, a

small building of mat and bamboo, under a white pagoda, facing the sunlit river and the purple hills beyond. The view from it, opened up to please a woman's whim, is now a common heritage, and it helps to while away many an hour between noon and evening, when weariness and dust are afoot.

Here, we are in the suburbs of the old city, not far from the site of the old Roman Catholic church. A short way off is the Chinese Joss-House, familiar to every reader of Sir Henry Yule's narrative. It is little used now by portly merchants as a place of leisure of an afternoon; its doors are oftener closed than open, and its precincts echo but seldom to the footfalls of its once numerous *clientèle*. Yet it survives and is still alive; almost the only building of note in this deserted capital that is. Chinamen still live in its neighbourhood, and the Chinese strain is visibly marked in the faces of many of the women and children who live in the street that runs past it. It is a shady and quiet thoroughfare now, this Street of the Ambassadors, and it is become the centre of the silk-weaving industry, which still survives in Amarapura. In every house there is a loom, and amidst the dust and the squalor, the rich colours of the silk flame and dazzle the eye. On moon-lit nights the weavers work far into the small hours of the morning, and the stillness of the lambent night is broken by the restless click of countless shuttles. One other relic of the past survives with this weaving of the silk—the culture of the grape-vine, introduced here a hundred years ago by Italian missionaries. Every house has before it a trellis or pergola of bamboo, overlaid with the beautiful familiar tracery of leaf and fruit. Under this the women sit, and

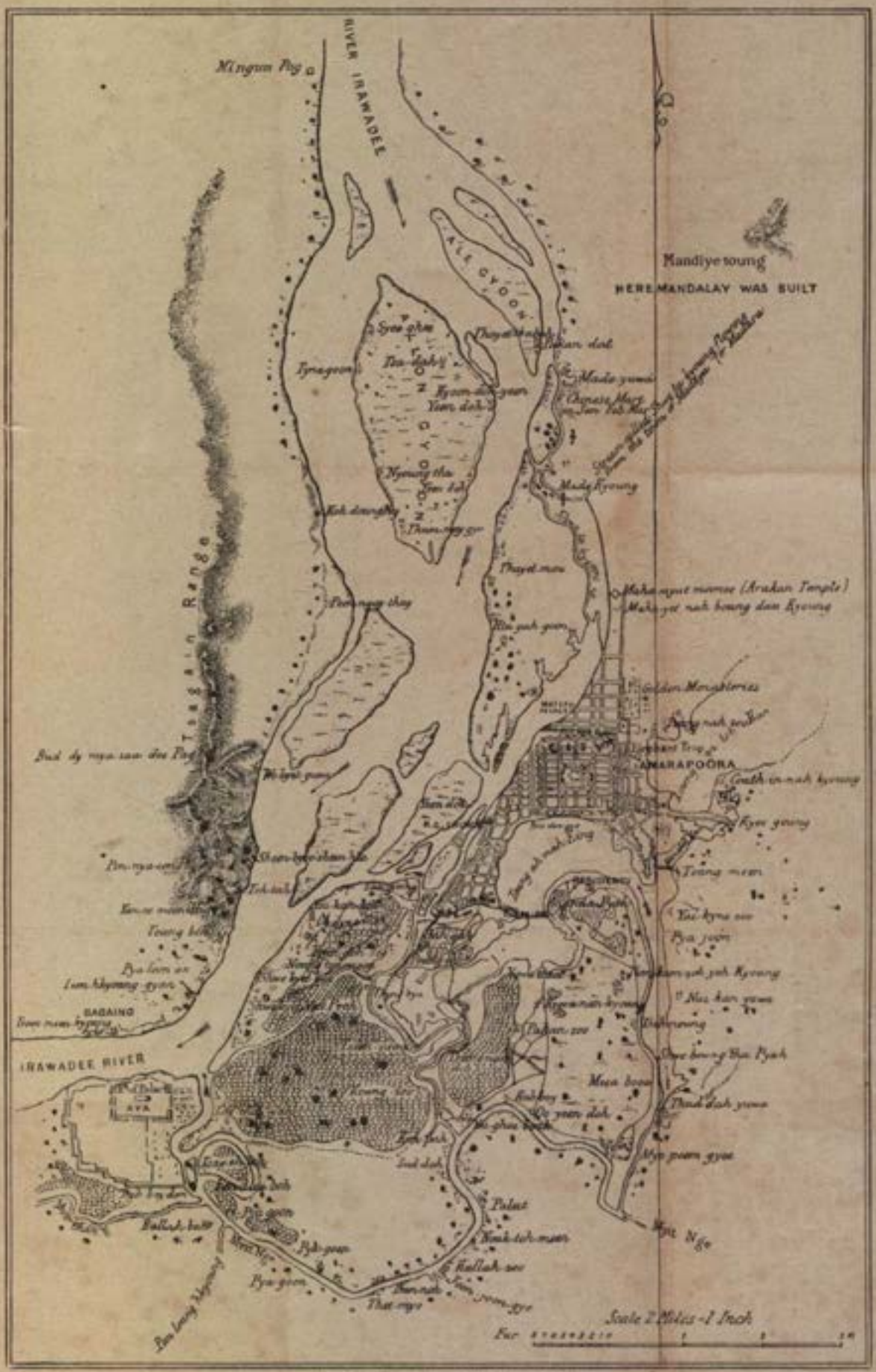
SILK-WEAVING UNDER THE VINES

the dappled light falls on the circling wheels of silk. The fruit is poor, for the people pay little attention to its culture, yet one is glad of it for the memory it carries with it of the past.

All the neighbourhood here is crowded with pagodas and monasteries; many of them of noble design, of rich and elaborate tracery. All but the strongest and noblest will pass away. The thousand fingers of decay are busy with the carved roofs, the rich mouldings of gorgeous doors, the gold and the mosaic, the vermilion pillars, and the lotus thrones of Gautama. Innumerable figures of the great founder are scattered about amongst the ruins, some still fresh and perfect, others in hopeless dissolution. From under a golden tectum the serene face looks down with unruffled calm; from the débris of a fallen roof, the same face, bespattered with mud and buried to the ears in broken bricks and splintered timber, looks out with a grotesque suggestion; in the shelter of some inner chamber amidst the ruins, tall figures stand, untouched as yet by the prevailing decay.

As one goes to and fro, from shrine to shrine, from one rich carving to another, from one deserted courtyard to the next, in all of which there are traces of patient work, of skill, of art, it is impossible to resist a feeling of indignation at the caprice which wantonly put an end to them all.

Further on we come to the site of the palace. Of the stockade there is now no trace; a low line of broken bricks marks the site of the inner wall. Two masonry buildings survive; one of which is described by the people as the royal treasury, the other as the royal watch-tower,



From YULE'S *Embassy to the Court of Ava*

MAP OF AMARAPURA AND SAGAING IN 1855

Most of the wooden buildings, the thrones, the turrets, the gilded columns, were removed to Mandalay. The site of the Eastern Gate, which once opened only to the King, of the low-browed postern beside it, under which the heads of Ambassadors were bowed, is a narrow and dusty track, bordered by a thin hedge of wild crotons. The Bahosin and the Reliquary are reduced to mere

THE EASTERN GATE OF THE PALACE; ALL THAT REMAINS OF IT

hollows in the ground, with an edge of broken rubble; the tomb of Shwébo Min, King of Burma, stands under a rough wooden canopy, built by the charity of a new Government, alone in the furrowed fields. The plough has been busy over all the precincts of the palace. At one end the railway track cleaves its way through the débris of the walls and the unquiet trains rage within a pistol shot of

the King's innermost sanctuary. But fifty years have gone by since the King received here the shoeless Ambassadors of England, since tumblers and dancers performed in the outer courts, and princes went by with their retinues, high on the necks of caparisoned elephants, and in jewelled

KING SHWÉBO MIN'S TOMB

litters under golden umbrellas that flashed in the noonday sun. The transition has been complete; it could not be more absolute; and it has all happened within the easy memory of living men.

What remains of the city wall is daily disappearing

under the ministrations of a Surati railway contractor, who has purchased of the State the right to cart away the bricks.* One cannot blame the State for handing it over to him, for the process of destruction was begun by a king of Burma; yet in the spectacle of this alien destroying the palace of a king there is a jarring note. Here in the East, it reminds one, there is little of that

THE GREAT GUN OF AMARAPURA

gradual passing that makes of old walls and ruined fortresses things of mellow beauty; which hides under wall-flowers and ivy, under moss and lichen, under the snowy bloom of the pear, or amidst drooping masses of lilac, the inevitable sadness of decay. Here in a world of violent contrasts and sudden death, Mortality reveals herself, brutal and unashamed.

* This was stopped.

Mandalay

If you wish to know what this city of desolation has been, read the narratives of the Englishmen who came here a century ago; the enthusiastic narrative of Symes, the balanced prose of Yule. Read all that they have to say of the pomp and circumstance, the arrogance and pride, the splendour and attraction of Amarapura the Immortal, when it was the capital city of the kings of Burma; and here and there with painstaking research you will be able to identify some of the localities they name. The lake, even at this time of drought, is beautiful. Its fringe is green with rice fields, whose rich verdure is in grateful contrast with the barrenness of the season. The long bridge "along which the presents and the cavalry of the escort were despatched, to await us on the other side," still survives, but on the verge of dissolution. Across the water, where dark trees cluster, one can still vaguely identify the site of the Residency where the Ambassadors of England were lodged. At the near end of the bridge, the colossus of Gautama upon which they looked still rises up unchanged.

The site of the city is more attractive and picturesque than that of Mandalay, and as one walks along the border of the lake, or is borne swiftly by train through the tamarind groves which frame its waters and the broad purple river and the shimmering hills of Sagaing, one cannot but regret its abandonment for the drier, dustier, and more isolated city which took its place.

Its history, a brief and chequered tale, is told in the following pages.

THE DRAGON PAGODA, AMARAPURA

II. THE STORY OF AMARAPURA

The year 1757, which by common acceptance ushered in the Empire of Great Britain in India, was a scarcely less notable one in the annals of Burma. While Robert Clive was fighting at Plassey and demonstrating to the Indian world the advent of a new Power into its midst, the foundations of a neighbouring State, destined before long to come into conflict with the British arms, were being laid by one who was as great in his own way as Robert Clive. The career of this personage, known to history as Alompra, is of the deepest interest to the student of Burmese character. For Alompra is the type of the spasmodic energy and latent power of his race, and those who are ready to dispose of the Burmese people as an indolent if attractive community, destined to wither before the advance of more laborious competitors, must of needs ponder upon his career, and upon the careers of other men like him in the history of the Burmese race.

Sprung from the humblest origin, by profession a humble cultivator of the soil—it fell to him to rescue his nation from the bondage into which it had fallen to its ancient rivals the Môn of Pegu, to destroy for ever their claim to the overlordship of Burma, and to establish an empire extending from Manipur to Bangkok, and a dynasty which was to perpetuate itself for a hundred and thirty years.

With Alompra we are indeed not directly concerned in tracing the history of Amarapura; but it is of significance to point out that the founder of the Immortal City

KING BO-DAW-PAYA'S TOMB AT AMARAPURA

was his son, and that twenty-three years only had elapsed from the date of his death when its foundations were laid.

In the interval much had transpired. Alompra, stricken with a mortal complaint under the very walls of Ayuthia, hastened back with all speed to the home of his fathers at Shwébo. But death overtook the strenuous fighter while he was yet on the way. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Naung-daw-gyi, who reigned at Sagaing for the brief space of three years. In the reign of his successor, Sin-byu-shin, the capital was once more set up at Ava, in the year 1764. Great events transpired in the decade that followed, but these appertain to the history of Ava. Within twelve years Sin-byu-shin—Lord of the White Elephant, and second son of the conqueror Alompra—also died, and the selection of his successor was fraught with the customary difficulties that attend the succession to an Eastern throne. For Alompra upon his deathbed had assigned the throne to each of his sons in turn, and of his six sons four were still eligible to succeed him. But the followers of Singu-min, the eldest son of Sin-byu-shin, a lad of nineteen years, succeeded in placing him upon the throne: and soon after, for his additional security, they put to death his uncle, the fourth son of Alompra.

His fifth son, a man of thirty-seven, was kept under a jealous surveillance at Sagaing, where he quietly awaited the opportunity that his rival's youth and indiscretion were presently to bring him. And it is upon this prince that the reader's attention should be focussed, for it was he who became the founder of Amarapura and the centre of its brief glory for the space of forty years.

Into the details of his succession it is unnecessary here to enter. He reached the throne by means of a double intrigue, which involved the destruction at once of his Sovereign and of the tool through whom that destruction was wrought. Both of his victims were his nephews, and scarcely more than boys. They were indeed no match for one who had been in his youth the companion of Alompra, who had shared in his childhood the humble origin and the astonishing rise of his father, at an epoch of great national reaction. He had, for an Eastern prince, the inestimable privilege of birth outside the purple. His character was moulded, and his personality inspired, by the events which led up to the founding of his dynasty.

GENERAL D'ORGONI, FRENCH ADVENTURER AT AMARAPURA, 1855

The events of his long reign indicate clearly enough that he inherited a large share of the grandiose ability and no slight touch of the insanity of his house; and of the

impression he left upon contemporary Western observers fitted to pass judgment upon him, we shall presently be furnished with examples. Yet it is not easy to arrive at the essential mind of a king, and opinion is divided as to his real character before it became affected by the circumstances of a throne. Colonel Symes, who visited Amarapura in the year 1795, within thirteen years of his accession to kingship, suggests that he began well, but grew rapidly embittered by ingratitude and by knowledge of the conspiracies that were directed against his person. The Barnabite Father, San Germano, who for the space of twenty-three years kept a watchful eye upon the events of his reign, inclined to the same view.

There is merit in such opinions, and it seems possible that the Emperor Bo-daw-paya might have contrived to go down to fame with a happier reputation, had not the terribly developing effect of power, in an Eastern and half-civilised society, brought out the latent ferocity of his race. And yet, even this view of his character is difficult to sustain, for almost his first act was to put to death his rivals, whose "queens and concubines, holding their babes in their arms, were burnt alive." An act of still greater cruelty signalised his success over a conspiracy which all but unseated him from the throne. A holocaust was made of the inhabitants of Paungga, where the conspiracy originated. "Notwithstanding," wrote the Father San Germano, who landed in Burma within a few weeks of this event, "notwithstanding the innocence of the great majority of the inhabitants, he caused them all to be dragged from their dwellings, not excepting even the old men or tender infants, and then

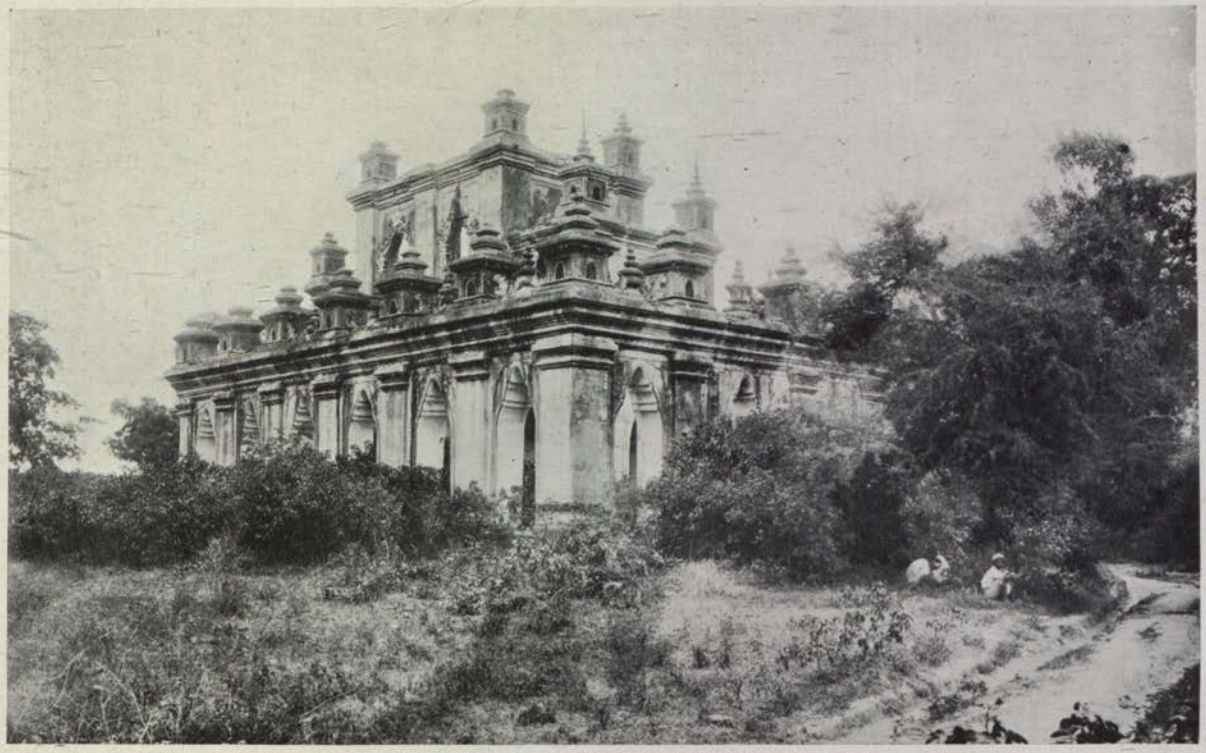
KING BAGYI-DAW'S TOMB AT AMARAPURA

to be burnt alive upon an immense pile of wood. The village was afterwards razed to the ground, the trees and plants in its gardens were cut up and consumed by fire, its very soil was turned up with the ploughshare, and a stone was erected upon the spot as a mark of perpetual malediction." The heart of Samuel could not have desired anything more terrible than this !

And thus it came that Amarapura was founded.

For the new King looked with aversion upon a capital discredited in the eyes of the world, upon a palace which had twice within a brief space been attacked by usurpers, upon which guns had been trained, in which blood had been shed. He came to the throne under a cloud of sinister augury and in the midst of circumstances of which policy required that he should efface the memory. The city of Ava, which had now stood before the world for four hundred and twenty years, had little association with the dynasty but recently founded by his father. He was bent upon a clean sheet and a fresh tablet upon which to write the history of Burma, and he had sons to whom he was resolved, in violation of his father's will, to ensure the succession after his own death.

The new city was laid out accordingly, four square, with moat and crenellated walls, after the immemorial usage of Burma. The chosen site was but a little way from Ava, and to it on May 10, 1783, he moved in solemn procession and entered in. But his people still lingered amidst their homes, reluctant to quit the time-honoured site. The Emperor was not minded to listen to their protests. In a very little space they were compelled to move, and no sooner was Amarapura inhabited, than Ava, famed as



DETAIL OF ENTABLATURE OF THUDAMA ZAYAT, AMARAPURA

the residence of twenty-six kings and happy in its superb position and in the splendour of its public buildings, was instantly abandoned. Even the palm-trees, which sheltered its thoroughfares, were cut down ; its mellow walls were broken into, and the river, which had hitherto served as its best protection, was suffered to enter in and complete its destruction.

Upon this policy of "Thorough" the Emperor proceeded to mould his reign. Scarcely was he established in his new capital, when he undertook the conquest of the ancient kingdom of Aracan, and removed to Amarapura, in defiance of the obstacle presented by the intervening mountains, the most sacred image of the Buddha, which for twenty centuries had been the cherished possession of the Aracanese. The empire of Bo-daw-paya has passed from the category of nations, his capital is dust, but the sanctity of this image remains unabated, and to this day it commands the unwavering homage of the entire Burmese race, untouched by the movement of secular dynasties and events.

The Emperor's brain was turned by his easy victory. His pride was inflated by the sight of all that Eastern conquest means—the captive king with all his train of comely women, the captive Ministers of State ; the jewels and the trophies and the other material evidences of success. The traditional home of his race was become too small for him. Napoleonic visions chased each other across his heated imagination ; a Court as servile as it was arrogant ministered to these illusions. In the world as he knew it, in the ocean of the four islands inhabited of men, and girt about by mountains five million miles high, he conceived

that he was the greatest potentate of all. In his own lozenge-shaped island of Jambudwipa, which includes such trifles as Siam, China, and the Indian Empire, the new "Emperor of the Rising Sun" resolved to be supreme.

THE KYAUK-TAW-GYI IMAGE

So greatly had the quiet gentleman of Sagaing developed under the warming sun of prosperity!

At a formal council of his Ministers he propounded the plans of his ambition, and traced in swiftly imaginative lines the forthcoming annihilation of Siam, the conquest of China, the overthrow of the British in India, and the reduction to vassalage of the Great Mogul. As the broken

monarch of Aracan was brought before him, the Emperor doubtless reflected how well the descendants of Tamerlane and Akbar would grace his future triumphs.

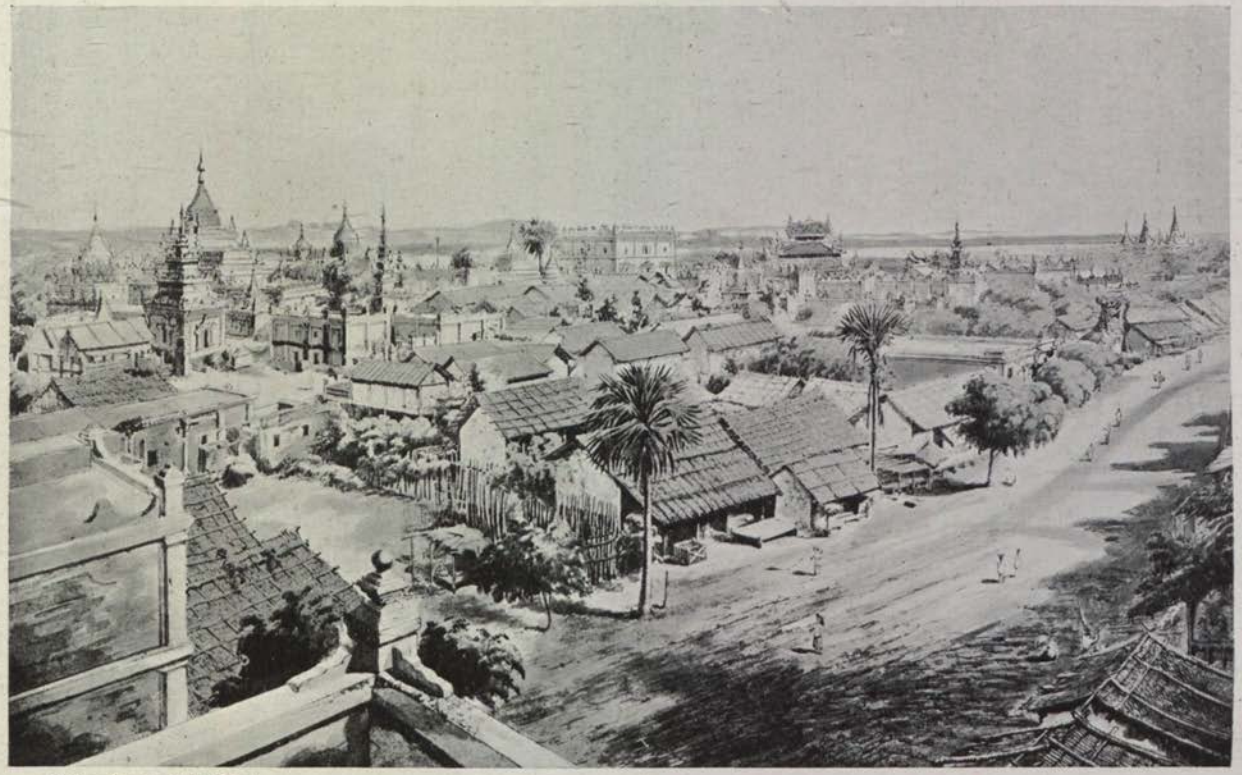
It was a vain and childish dream. Within a year his armies were flying back from the Siamese border, and the conqueror himself was fain to escape before them to the shelter of his own city of Rangoon. Indeed, as Father San Germano scathingly observes, "Nothing but the peaceful disposition of the Siamese monarch saved the Burmese empire from total subjection, and the emperor from becoming a tributary to Siam."

But the Burmese spirit soon recovers itself. Within a few weeks of his disgraceful flight His Majesty, like another Caligula, announced to all and sundry that he had conquered Siam, and within a very few years—the tale is all but incredible—he set out upon that policy of aggression which, in the reign of his successor, was to result in the first of three disastrous wars with England.

It was at this period, while the Emperor's spirit was recovering its stupendous buoyancy, that there appeared at his court Captain Michael Symes, the first Ambassador sent by a Governor-General of India to the Burmese Court, and the occasion of his visit will serve to depict the life of Amarapura at the time of his visit in the year 1795.

AMARAPURA IN 1795

Thirteen years had sufficed alike to ruin Ava and to bring Amarapura up to the zenith of its splendour; and we find the gallant Captain struck with the contrast presented by the spires, the turrets and the lofty Pyatthats of Amarapura,



From a drawing by C. Grant

AMARAPURA IN 1855

and the gloomy and deserted walls of Ava. "As we sailed near the opposite shore," he writes, "the sun shone full upon the hill, and its reflected rays displayed the scenery to the highest advantage; the swollen state of the river gave to the waters the semblance of a vast lake interspread with islands, in which the foundations of Amarapura seemed to be immersed. On entering the lake, the number of boats that were moored as in a harbour to avoid the influence of the sweeping flood, the singularity of their construction, the height of the waters which threatened inundation to the whole city, and the amphitheatre of lofty hills that nearly surrounded us, altogether presented a novel scene exceedingly interesting to a stranger."

And there, with this novel scene before him, forbidden to cross the waters that divided the city from his camp, the English Ambassador was constrained to employ himself as best he might for the space of two months, while the Emperor who had run away from Siam was reflecting, with the aid of all his councillors, whether it was consistent with his dignity to receive such a person or not.

The passing of a hundred years puts facts in something like their just proportion, and the tribulations of Captain Symes, eager for the honour of his Governor-General, and the pride of the Burmese monarch, afraid to do anything that might lower his own prestige, resolve themselves to-day into the by-play of an excellent comedy; but to the gallant captain in His Majesty's 76th Regiment of Foot, and to the *pseudo* conqueror of Ayuthia, it was all very serious business indeed. The patient pomposity of the Ambassador was no match for the almost

infantile pride of the most arrogant Court in the world, and the embassy was a failure from the moment of its inception.[1]

After a month and a half had elapsed, the Ambassador was told that he would be received at Court. A day, known in the happy nomenclature of the Court as the "Day of Obeisance," was chosen for the purpose, and His Excellency, preceded and followed by strange persons whom he describes with evident relish as *Oni-roupserees*, or "Registers of Strangers," on horseback, and *Let-zounserees*, or "Registers of Presents," dressed in official robes, he himself appearing in the catalogue of the procession under the strange guise of "The Elephant of the Representative of the Governor-General," set forth to do unwitting homage at the Court of Amarapura. By a happy arrangement he was taken, this simple, high-minded Englishman, through the palace gate reserved for the exit of funerals, and not a smile broadened the stolid faces of the populace of diplomatists who looked on, with a politeness which delighted the Ambassador, from behind the *yaza-mats* or latticed palings of the royal city. At intervals, and while yet the palace was afar off, he was required to bow down and make obeisance to the abode of royalty; and as he drew nearer, the representative of the Governor-General had to dismount from the elephant in whose personality he had hitherto

[1] The following passage throws a curious light on the relations of Symes with the Burmese Court:

"Stickling for rank or precedence is generally not necessary at the Court of Ava, or at least more is to be lost than gained by entering into a contention with the Court upon such minute points. Should the Burmese discover that the British Envoy is disposed to contend on questions of etiquette, it would arouse their jealousy."—Rev. ADONIRAM JUDSON.

been lost, and walk in his stockings to the great Council Hall known as the Hlut-daw.

He was surprised, he admits, at the magnificence of

From a sketch by C. Grant

SIR ARTHUR PHAYRE, ENVOY IN 1855

its appearance. It was supported by seventy-seven lofty pillars, and at the far end of it there stretched a high gilded lattice quite across the building, and in the centre of the lattice was a gilded door, which, when opened,

From a sketch by C. Grant

AMARAPURA IN 1855

displayed the throne. And within this magnificent saloon there were seated all the princes and the principal nobility of the Burman Empire. The Ambassador was deeply impressed; but the impression was to be deepened still further. As he sat here in his bootless feet, proud of his country and of being its representative, there swept by a splendidly organised procession of princes for his special delectation. First there came one, mounted on the neck of a very fine elephant, which, with a skill that was presently to be forgotten at the Court of Burma, he guided himself; whilst a servant behind screened him from the sun with a gilded parasol. Fifty musketeers led the way, followed by halberdiers carrying spears with gilded and tasselled shafts. The officers of this prince's household came next, in velvet robes and embroidered caps, with chains of gold depending from their shoulders. Another body of spearmen followed with his palanquin of state.

Next after him came in yet greater pomp the Princes of Bassein, Toungoo, and Prome—the two latter destined, though they knew it not, to a violent end at the hands of the next King of Burma—and then finally, as the Bahosin, the great drum of the palace, sounded twelve, there swept by the Heir-apparent. The state in which this personage made his public entrance seemed to the Ambassador "highly superb and becoming his elevated station." Five hundred musketeers in uniform and a squadron of Manipuri Horse heralded his approach; after them there came a score of lictors holding golden wands, a group of military officers of rank in gilded helmets, the ministers of his household in velvet robes and chains

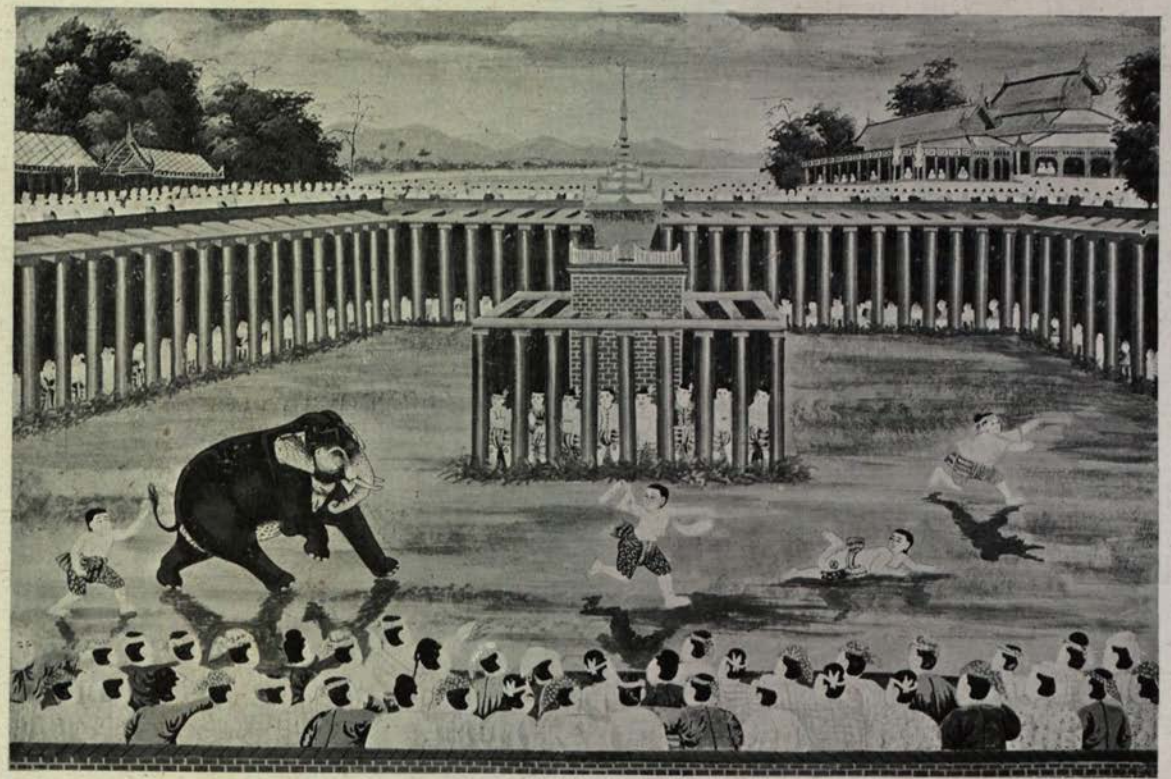
of gold. The Prince was borne on men's shoulders in a golden litter. A nobleman held a gilded fan to screen him from the sun, and on each side of him walked six Manipuri astrologers dressed in white gowns with white caps studded with stars of gold. Close behind, his servants carried his water-flagon, and a gold betel box of a size which appeared to be no inconsiderable load for a man. Elephants and led horses with rich housings came after, and bodies of spearmen and musketeers, clothed in blue, in green, and in red, concluded the procession. The splendid show seemed to the observant Ambassador to surpass anything of which any surviving Court in Hindustan was capable.

It was not without its due effect. Inclined from the moment of his arrival in Burma to take a grandiose view of the nation and people to whom he was accredited, Captain Symes took away with him impressions which were at least a gilded version of the facts, and in his estimate of the population he misread them entirely. Nevertheless, there is a certain poetic fitness in the splendid conclusions to which he came; for the Burmese Empire was at the time he entered it at its zenith. Its territories included the whole of the present Province of Burma, an area of more than 200,000 square miles; and it was shortly to extend itself over the neighbouring kingdom of Assam. The Emperor, firmly seated on his throne, was to consolidate his power for the space of another quarter of a century. A special levy on the revenues of the country had filled his exchequer to overflowing. The great reaction of which Alompra was the symbol was still in its flood; and the reigning Sovereign, in

spite of many extravagant eccentricities, was a man of ability and sense.

And yet we can see that the elements of disruption were already at work. Stability of power, solid principles of government, the action of steadily perfecting constitutional forces, these have never been the characteristics of Burmese rule. Splendid success followed by almost irretrievable disaster; floods of all but irresistible attack upon neighbouring States, followed by periods of intense stagnation at home; opulence, which at intervals for centuries dazzled the European imagination from the days of Cæsar Frederick to the visit of Michael Symes, followed by poverty of the utmost extremity—of such is the fabric of Burmese history.

Looking back from this distance we can see more clearly than did Symes, the causes at work which were presently to bring the traditional destruction. At the centre of the nation lay the royal Court, which regarded the great provinces of which the Empire was composed, its acres of more than a hundred million, but as a private estate; an estate utterly at its disposal to mismanage or destroy. Did the Emperor purpose to build a Tower of Babel that would surpass all other buildings in the world, his people were brought in battalions to the scene of building, and made to give their labour free; and those who came and those who stayed away, alike contributed to the fund raised ostensibly for the purpose. Did the Emperor take a new wife, or add a lady to his seraglio, then a portion of the realm must be detached for her support. In the happy phraseology of the country, she would become its "Eater." The Ministers of State, the



From a painting by Saya Chone

ELEPHANT-CATCHING AT AMARAPURA

royal officers, the innumerable functionaries of Government, must each have his share of the realm, its cities, its villages, and its lakes. And since this share would bring with it honour and power and wealth, it must first be bought by a heavy contribution to the Court exchequer; and since the foothold of a courtier is unstable, it must be strengthened by further contributions; and since life is short, the harvest of office must be quickly gathered in. For all this there was an inevitable penalty. The country thus mismanaged made little progress; wealth was not suffered to accumulate, and capital was unknown. Trade was alternately tolerated and strangled in its growth.

The military system of the nation was ill adapted to any prolonged success. A conscription in theory, it was wholly unorganised. There was no training and little if any equipment. Under the impulse of a great national reaction, it was capable of yielding astonishing results in conflict with unwarlike neighbours; the *élan* of the people was enough to carry them over such obstacles as were likely to confront them; but if the war were protracted, or if the reacting impulse were at its ebb, or, most deadly alternative of all, the enemy had modern arms and staying power and the unimaginative courage which is not dazzled by rumour and the advance of numbers—the Burmese system was at an end; and all its terrible discipline of penalties exacted from the unoffending wife and children of the soldier at fault, was of no avail to keep the army at the front.

But to the British Ambassador, impressed with the splendour of the capital and the wonderful dignity of

the Burmese character, based as it is upon a supreme and unaffected conviction of its own superiority, the weakness of the Burmese State was but partially apparent. As a soldier he could not but notice the inefficiency of the Burmese army ; as a politician he was completely deceived. The splendid ceremony, to which as we have seen he bears eloquent testimony, was but the prelude to an insulting humiliation. He believed that he was to have an audience of the King, and he crouched upon the floor of the Council Hall, vainly endeavouring to conceal his bootless feet in accordance with the etiquette imposed upon him, in the expectation that His Majesty would eventually appear. But the golden throne which towered above him remained unfilled. He was asked three formal questions by "The Royal Voice," an officer of the Court, the purpose of which was to ignore absolutely the Governor-General who had sent him, and he was presently dismissed.

Some portion of this treatment must be ascribed to the arrogance of the Burmese Court, to the barbaric instinct of imposing on a stranger ; but some of it must be attributed to deeper and more justifiable causes. To the Emperor of Burma it must have seemed highly derogatory to receive an embassy from an un-royal source, upon any other than a subordinate footing, and there is no doubt that this relationship with a Governor-General instead of his master, always rankled in the hearts of the Burmese sovereigns.[1] As time passed and painful

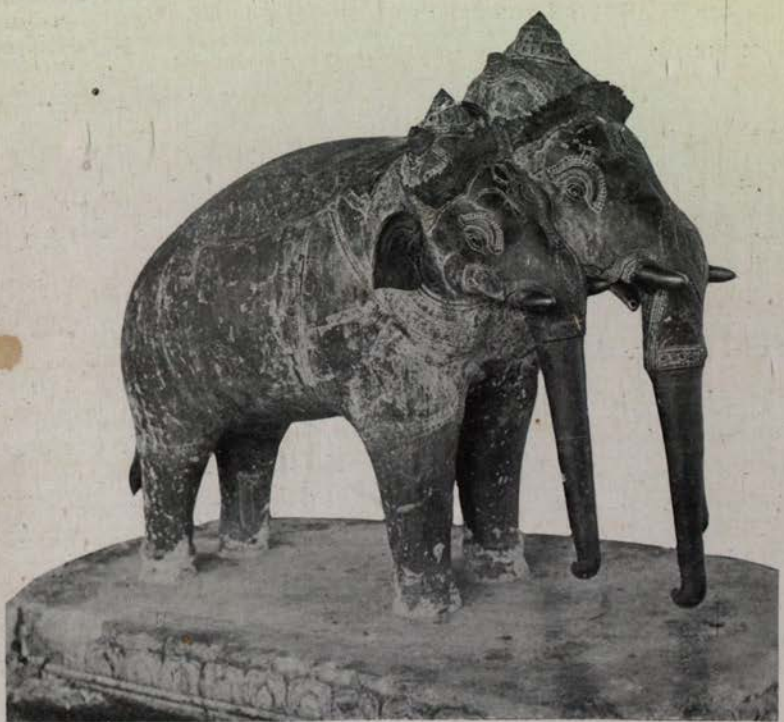
[1] It is related of King Tharawadi as late as the year 1840 that he was disgusted at discovering that the Goombanee Min, the East India Company, was not a Sovereign, but a number of merchants with whom he could have nothing to do.

experience brought them knowledge of the material ascendency of their neighbour, the Satrap of India; they grudgingly accepted the logic of facts; and at the late hour of Sir Arthur Phayre's Mission to the Court of Burma, when two-thirds of the Empire of his forefathers had already been swallowed up by his British neighbours, King Mindon received the Viceroy's Embassy on terms of frank equality. Yet even then the necessity for doing so brought some humiliation to the royal conscience; and accepting the old-world sentiment of kingship, the dignity of nations, one cannot but enter into the feelings of the Burmese Court.

Captain Symes was eventually successful in securing an audience: but at a later time when he paid a second visit to Amarapura, he was received with unalloyed rudeness and neglect, and it was not given to him to look upon the royal countenance. Between these two visits there occurred the embassy of Captain Hiram Cox; for himself an undiluted tragedy. The Governor-General at Calcutta had not yet realised the true significance of the position. He was still oblivious of the fact that it was he, and not his Ambassador, who was an occasion of offence to the Court of Amarapura; and so it fell out, as such things have often fallen out before and since, that the luckless Cox went out a scapegoat into the wilderness to die of fever at Chittagong, while the gallant Colonel Symes buckled on his sword and once more essayed with a misplaced confidence the task that had ruined the other.

Time flowed on at Amarapura with Bo-daw-paya still on the throne and great events afoot in India.

The time was not yet for Viceroy and Monarch to try conclusions. For a space the Emperor was left to his own devices, to grandiose projects of irrigation, of temple-building, of religious reform; and the mere length of his reign gave his people repose. In 1819 at the age of eighty-one he died, having reigned over Amarapura for the space of thirty-six years. His successor saw fit to abandon his grandfather's capital, and for fourteen years it lay desolate.



BRONZE FIGURES OF ELEPHANTS BROUGHT FROM ARACAN BY BO-DAW-PAYA

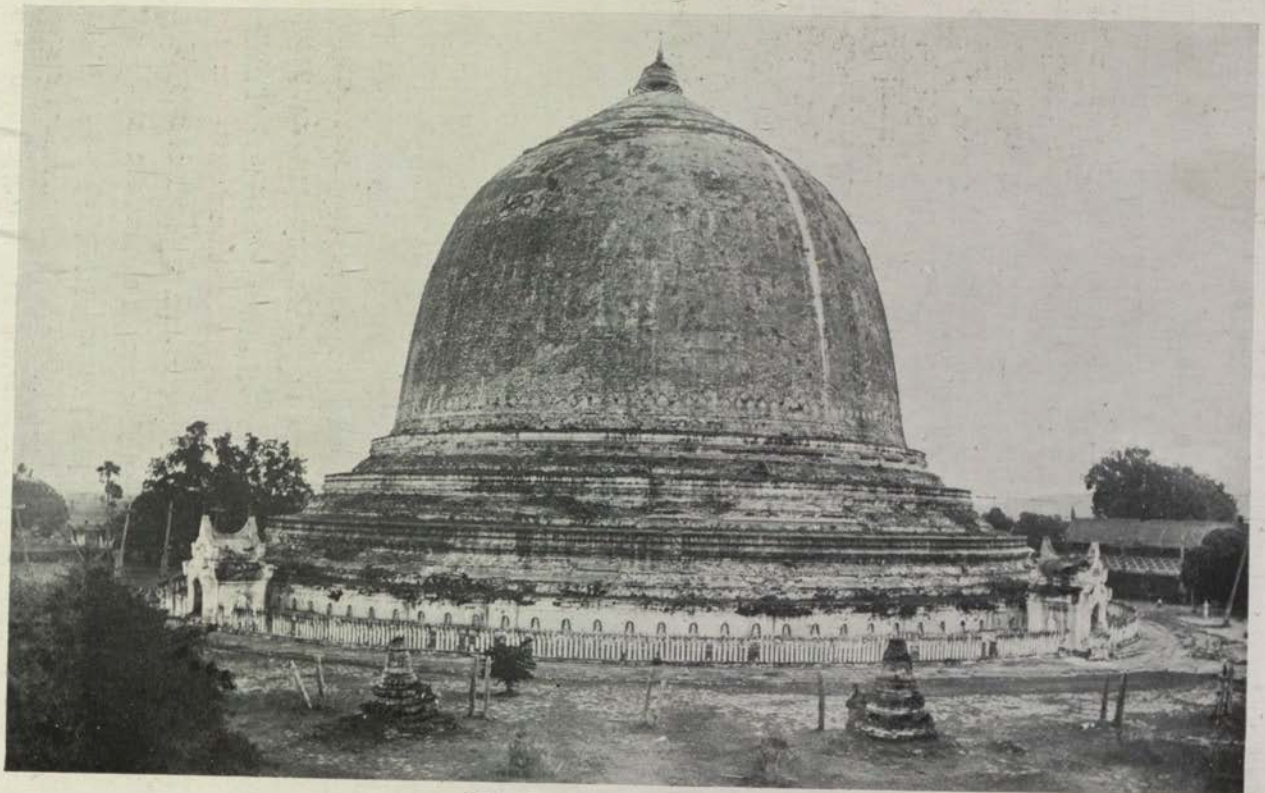
RAFTS BEFORE SAGAING

CHAPTER IV

I. SAGAING

A Minister of the King

SAGAING, founded six hundred years ago, upon the extinction of Pagān, is one of the many past capitals of Burma, and if it has no great place in history, it retains, for it can never lose, the glory of its site. It is built on the west bank of the river, in the elbow of a curve made by it after leaving Ava. The great stream here narrows to a thousand yards, between cliffs which the architectural instinct of the people has crowned with flights of white pagodas. There are few richer landscapes in the world; and whether the spectator comes upon it suddenly through the secluded ruins of Amarapura on the further shore, or looks down upon it with deliberate



THE KAUNG-HMU-DAW PAGODA

intent from one of the neighbouring eminences, it is of unfailing beauty.

The town is built on a level plain which spreads away from the south-western territory of the Sagaing hills. A great embankment along the river face to the old fort protects it now from the main floods of the Irrawaddy; but of old the town was apt to be inundated by the waters which almost encircle it. In the early summer the river shrinks, leaving wide tracts of sand uncovered; leaving also between the sand and the embankment wall, a sloping terrace that is green with close turf in the dryest season. Trees are a gracious feature of Sagaing, and one may walk through the town at noonday entirely screened from the sun's rays by the great tamarinds which are its legacy from the past.

Of the once royal capital few secular traces now remain. But the old walled enclosure, an irregular square, can still be easily traced, and its walls will remain to bear testimony to its past for many centuries to come. Raised high above the intermediate hollows, they have now been converted into excellent high-roads, along which the wayfarers pass, and smart new people drive in painted gigs.

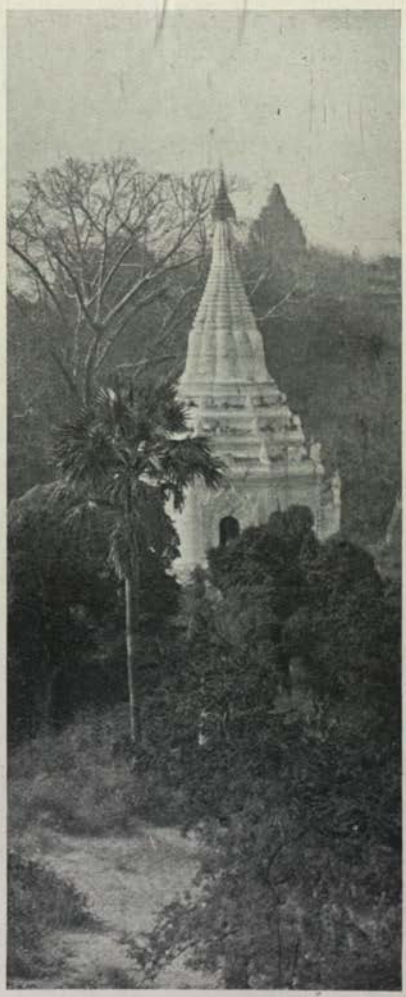
It is in its pagodas that the past of Sagaing really survives; and these are built for the most part on the spurs and pinnacles and in the shady hollows of the hills which reach away north of the town. The Kaung-hmu-daw, a solid *stupa* of antique design, is a great and notable exception. Its vast bulk towers up over the level plain near the new railway town of Ywa-

IN THE HEART OF THE SAGÁING THEBAID

taung. It was built in 1636 to commemorate the restoration of Ava as the capital of the Empire. The Aung-mye-law-ka Pagoda, built entirely of stone, was erected by King Bo-daw-paya, after the model of the Shwé-zigon at Pagān, on the site of the residence allotted to him before he came to the throne. It has five pairs of leogryphs, and was considered by successive Burmese kings to be a good model to copy. The Tupayōn is a pagoda of very rare type in Burma, and of peculiar architectural interest as marking a certain phase in the development of these structures. The Shwé-mok-taw Pagoda, according to tradition, was originally built by Asoka in the third century B.C., since when it has had many outer shells added to it. Some way to the west of the old walls there stands a remarkable colossus of Buddha, two and a half centuries old, a figure of white and gold, lifted high on a terraced platform under a pillared roof of imposing design. A paved court enclosed within a ruined wall spreads below it, and here of a summer evening, as the sky behind its contour flames with the glory of the passing sunset, one is apt to come upon such a spectacle as this; consider it, for it is typical of the land. A solitary worshipper kneels in the wide court before the image exalted above him. His hands are folded and held up in supplication. There is no sound in the great precincts, save that of the wind, and of his voice as it chaunts the aphorisms of his faith. The effect of the spectacle is enhanced, and lifted up to something strangely majestic, by the atmosphere, dry, prismatic, mystical—glorious with all the effulgence of

the closing day. One does not come upon sights like this out of Burma. There is some unconscious undercurrent of great qualities in the Burman personality that alone makes them possible.

By far the most interesting part of Sagaing lies in the hilly country above it, where austere monks live; and every peak bears testimony to the piety of bygone kings and people. The hills are skirted in the early summer, before the river has begun to rise, by a low sloping shore, along which a horseman can ride to the great bell of Mingun. The soil under foot varies from smooth turf to broken rock, with long intervals of silver sand. Cliffs rise up above it on one side, clothed with cactus and aloes, and on the other there spreads the purple river. It is easy to believe at times that one is riding by the sea. There are bays at intervals, and openings of miniature valleys wooded with the most splendid trees. In such shelters hamlets and monas-



THE LEKYUN-MANAUNG PAGODA

teries repose, and near the village of Wachet there is a colony of nuns.

At Wachet, also, there is a monastery, notable for its size and architecture. It combines, with some success, the antique wooden architecture with the modern masonry style now coming into vogue. The main building is entirely of wood, carved and gabled, and finished to the last point of its ascending roofs and gilded spire. Its deep Vandyke colour makes a rich contrast with the pale purple of the barren hills behind. It is built on a great platform of masonry, surrounded by a handsome wall, and is supported, where the natural slope makes this necessary, by buttresses and terraces. The terraces are roofed over, and make long corridors parallel to the river. Flights of stairs ascend through these from the river's bank to the lofty platform above. The walls and the balustrades are plain but well wrought, and no attempt has been made here to rival in mortar the delicate and complex character of carved wood. The monastery courts and open terraces have been planted with vines and Bougainvillias, which grow luxuriantly over light pergolas of cane. The familiar sight of the grape vine, its curling tendrils, its clusters of hanging fruit, its delicate light and shade, is peculiarly refreshing here to one who has not looked upon it before in Burma. The broad river flowing below these monastery walls extends at flood time nearly ten miles to the opposite shore.

As I came upon the village of Wachet for the first time, the peace of evening was spreading itself abroad. From the village lanes the red cattle were streaming down

to the river to drink, the young men mounted on their backs. Women and girls were splashing and laughing in its waters. Down the noble stream, boat-loads of travellers were being borne, some on long journeys, others only to Sagaing to a common festival. Their swift passage alone spoke to the eye of the river's movement. Along the sandy tracts, half overgrown with yellow-cupped flowers, the passing carts raised up small clouds of golden dust. Here and there a traveller took his way, his sandals in his hand. Yellow-robed monks went by, grave and reverend, with no thoughts of haste. The novices lounged in the monastery courts, beside the open balustrades, lazily observant of the passing world. From the shelter of their doll-like houses, nuns in salmon-pink garments, a little richer in tone from the reflected sunset,

THE LOTUS

made their careful way with water-pots to the river. The old-world life was afoot, and the scene before me was culled from the very heart of Burma.

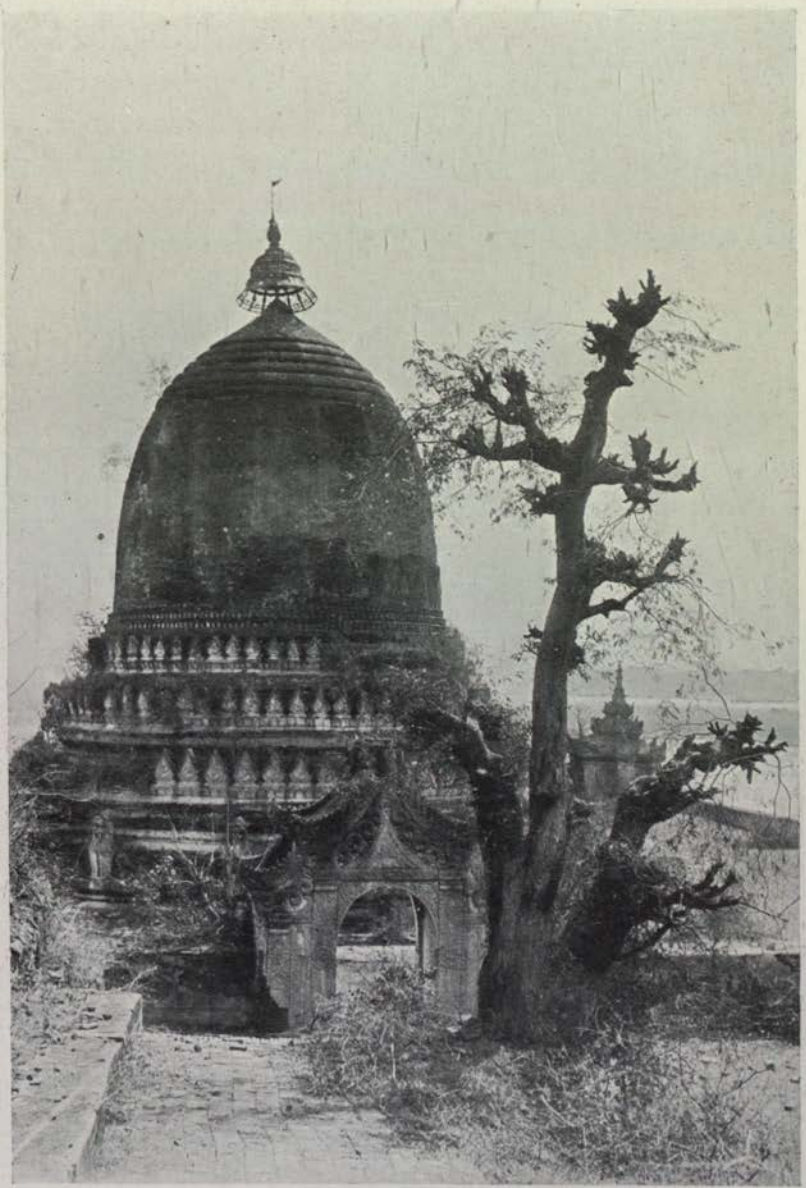
All the road to Wachet and beyond is lined with pagodas, some of which reach by lion-guarded stairs to the river, while others crown the pinnacles of the hills. One of the most beautiful is the Lekyun-Manaung, embosomed in great trees at the mouth of a little valley which opens on the river not more than a mile from the steamer-landing at Sagaing. It is of tulip shape, merging through narrowing rings to a point. The tulip rests on an octagonal base, within which there is enshrined a figure of Gautama surrounded by rows of curious beings cut in brown marble with long queues of hair. The porches of entrance are royal doors of the flamboyant design peculiar to the palace. There was of old a handsome wall around the court of the pagoda, decorated with figures of ogres in semi-relief. Its pattern may be gauged from one or two panels which still survive. But for the most part the plaster in which these figures are moulded has crumbled away, and the wall is in ruins. The two white leogryphs that face the river are in perfect preservation. Their heavy jaws and pointed fangs were meant to inspire fear; but they are become the home of pigeons which nest over the hollows of their tongues.

Near this interesting pagoda, there is a smaller one whose dome is a lotus flower half open and surmounted at the four corners by sphinxes. The flower upbears the small spire, which is surmounted by a canopy of bells. A little farther off, on low spurs of the hill-

LIONS AT SAGAING

side, are two pagodas of the Kaung-hmu-daw pattern. The second of these is beautifully formed, and it raises the conviction that the tale of the countryside concerning the shape of the Kaung-hmu-daw is true. On a nearer view, the delicate dome of the edifice resolves itself into a polygon, faintly fluted. It rises from a narrowing base of three concentric tiers, each of which is inlaid with masonry panels of fine design and workmanship. Little notice has hitherto been taken of the pagodas of Sagaing; but they will be found instructive in any study of pagoda architecture; and it is noticeable that most of the masonry, and especially the plaster decoration, compares well with that of Pagān, and is much superior to modern work of the same kind.

Stairs lead up to the pagoda from the river, guarded by small lions with marble eyes. Immediately above it there is a brick Thein or Hall of Ordination for monks, notable for its frescoes. These have suffered from the lapse of time, yet enough remains to make a picture of lively, even of historic, interest. It consists of the red crenellated walls and battlements of a royal city, with the familiar Bahosin or Clock Tower and the Reliquary that were a feature of Amarapura and of Ava as they are of Mandalay. There are trees in flower, mangoes and palms; there are crows upon the palace roof, and sentries with guns upon the ramparts; and there are gateways like those of Mandalay. Next there is a large scene depicting in a very spirited manner an attack on the palace. In the centre there are the many-roofed royal buildings, within which the king is shown



THE POLYGON BY THE RIVER

MARBLE FIGURE IN AN OLD SHRINE

seated, his ministers in yellow *gaung-baungs* making obeisance before him. About them all there is a palisaded enclosure, filled with sentries carrying *dahs*, ministers in flowing robes and court hats, and, most interesting of all, two Europeans with muskets, in the high gaiters and cocked hats of a hundred years ago. Without this palisade the red crenellated walls of the city are manned by the defenders, unmistakably Burmese, under the command of a chief with a red umbrella; while cannon and muskets at the embrasures and loopholes vomit their fire. Outside of all are the assailants; some in the agonies of death, others galloping, all armed with muskets and swords, and pressing the attack,

PLASTER

BUDDHA AND THE SNAKE KING

led at one end by a European. At the far top corner of the picture, another European with a red queue is depicted galloping up. Lances with pennons, elephants with castles on their backs, a stray tiger, boats on the river with savages dancing upon them in ecstasies, complete the list of details. It is with a curious sensation that one comes thus unexpectedly upon the cocked-hatted European—Englishman perhaps—of a century ago, here in a monkish hall of ordination amidst the lonely and barren hills, frequented now only by strict anchorites who have left the world.

Other frescoes may be seen in a pagoda still farther up the hill. The plaster is falling off; but the colours are still brilliant, and the painting is superior to that which is now done by Burmese artists. On the walls near the doorways there

are large figures of a Chinaman, a Shan, a Chin, and an Englishman of the same type as those in the Thein below.

From the summit of any one of the neighbouring peaks it is possible to get a comprehensive view of this strange world of old pagodas and secluded monasteries in which the strictest anchorites live. It is a Thebaid by nature, perfectly adapted to the purpose to which

THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY

it is put, and people come from afar to converse with the holy men and to look at the caves in the hillside, black as midnight, in which they meditate on the sorrows, the transitoriness, and the illusion of life. The life of the anchorite of Pagān is here revived, and it is full of interest to the student of Buddhism. Lastly, from here there expands the great world of the river, lined on its further shore with the pinnacles and domes of Ava,

Amarapura, and Mandalay. A spectacle of extraordinary magnificence and beauty.

II. MINGUN

Mingun, which lies a short way above Sagaing, on the western shore of the Irrawaddy, is famed for its great abortive pagoda and its mighty bell.

There is a nunnery there also, which stands by the river-bank, under the shelter of dark trees. The nuns come down the masonry stairs to the river to bathe, and close-cropped heads and ascetic garments fail entirely to hide the charm of the daughters of the soil. They bathe here by the river in the same artless, discreet way as their worldly sisters do. Puritanism is not in their blood. They are not at all averse to being looked at, spoken to; they are quite ready to smile; and in short, though their lives are free from scandal, their "vows" are not perpetual, and do not give any one the impression of being so.

The Méthila, or female celibate, has never reached the status of the monk in Burma. She corresponds rather to the Pothudaw, the holy men who give themselves up to religious works, but not to the monastic life. The Méthila shaves her head and wears a professional garment, and it is only here and there, as at Mingun, that she lives in a community, in a building specially set apart for her. The Order as a whole makes little claim on the reverence of the multitude. They are a humble people, mainly recruited from those to whom life has been unkind. Of notabilities who in later years have joined their ranks, there were the

THE FORESHORE AT SAGAING

Laungshé Queen, mother of King Thibaw, and the Salin Princess, the favourite daughter of King Mindon, who believed her to be his mother re-born upon earth. She was destined by him, in accordance with the custom of the kings of Burma, to be the wife of his successor; but the prospect of marrying King Thibaw proved unenticing, and upon his succession she promptly shaved her head and became a nun.

The Big Bell at Mingun, under its new carved roof, is some little way behind the nunnery, and it emits a deep, musical, and prolonged vibration on being struck with a light wooden post. When one first hears this sound issuing from amongst the trees, one pauses to wonder what it can be, for it is no single note, but a deep tremor which fills the air, and one can almost feel the contact of the waves as they come floating invisibly along. It is indeed a great majestic voice, that is heard only in its faint whisperings. The beam has yet to be made that will extract from it the full volume of its music. It is ninety tons in weight, the largest bell in the world that emits a sound, and withal a worthy companion to the gigantic fane that was destined to stand beside it.

What this great pagoda was meant to look like on completion may be judged from the little model of it under the dark mango tope which stands beside it along the edge of the river. Less than a third of the mighty fabric was completed when King Bo-daw-paya, who undertook its construction, died in the year 1819. Vast armies of unpaid workmen were employed in building it, and the King himself for nearly twenty years

LOOKING TOWARDS AVA

gave its construction his personal care and attention. To this end he established himself from time to time in a temporary palace near the pagoda, of which an echo survives in the name of Mingun. While encamped here on an island in the Irrawaddy, in February 1797, he was visited by Captain Hiram

THE NUNNERY

Cox, one of those long-suffering Ambassadors of England who for a hundred years were subjected to humiliation in the cause of polite intercourse between Burma and England. The Ambassador, who had been made to walk shoeless in the sun for the edification of the multitude, and to take his hat off

repeatedly to the King's tent as he approached it, has left an account of his reception by Bo-daw-paya.

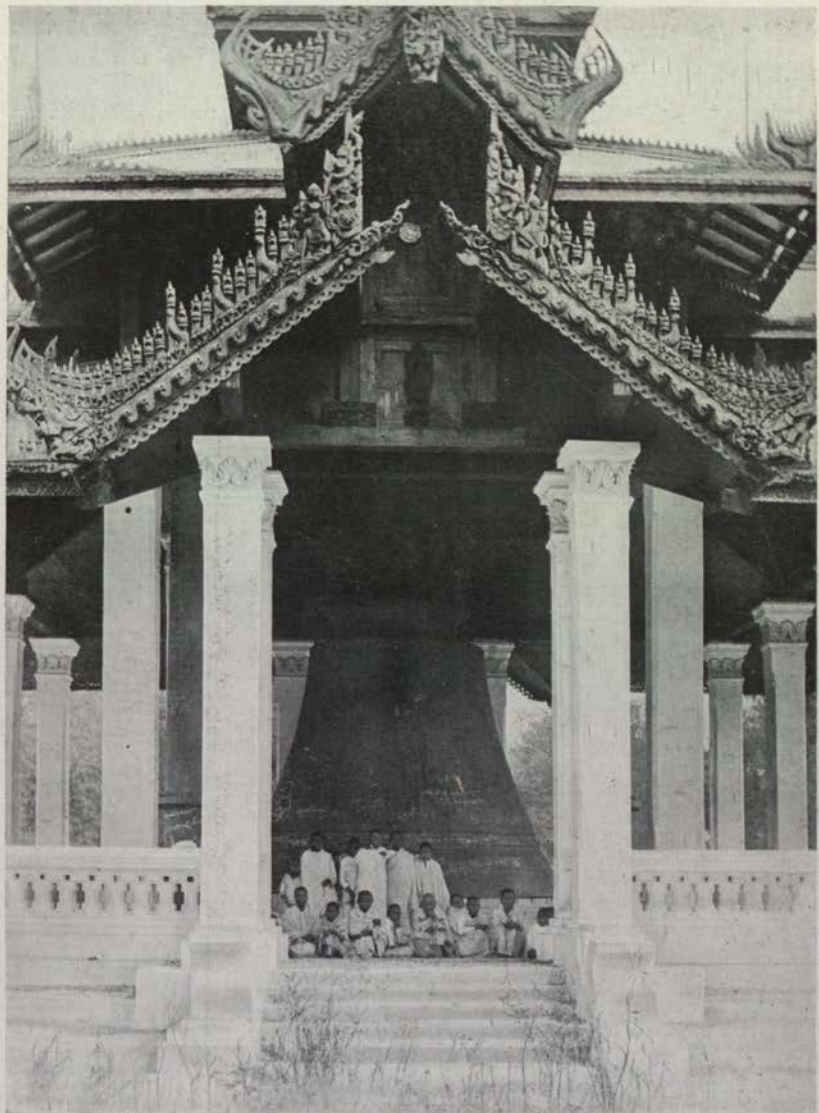
"After I had been seated," he writes, "about twenty

A NUN

minutes, placing my legs sideways, and leaning for support on my right hand, a very awkward and ungraceful position to those not accustomed to it, His Majesty entered and seated himself on the throne. He

was dressed in white muslin with a gold border, and had on a crown shaped something like a mitre about fifteen inches in height, but how ornamented I was too distant to observe. In his hand he had a small *chowrie*, made of peacocks' quills, with which he fanned away the flies; no one remained in the pulpit with him. He appeared rather lusty, his countenance open, and complexion rather fairer than the Burmans in general, with a thin grey beard, and altogether like a Chinese of the southern part of the Empire. After some questions he was pleased to say that he understood I was a sensible and polite gentleman; upon which I placed my hand upon my breast, and bowed my head. He immediately said, 'Ah, that is the manner in which the Europeans salute their sovereigns. The hand placed on the breast means that their respect flows from the heart.' To which the Viceroy replied in the affirmative. The Sandogan, first prostrating himself three times, then read from a *taar* leaf, in a ringing tone, an account of the presents. After sitting about twenty minutes, the King, addressing himself to the Viceroy, said, 'The weather is very warm, I must retire; take care of him.'"

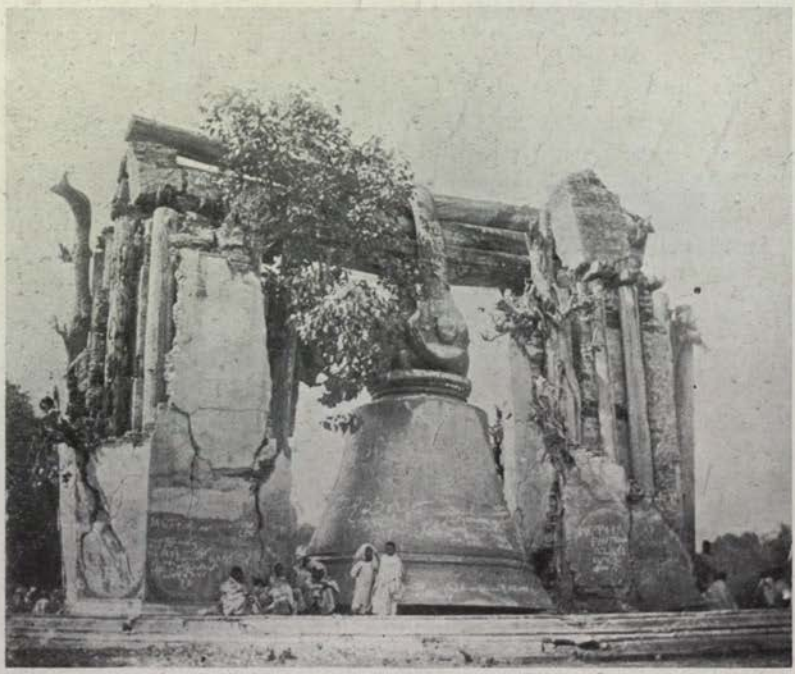
Captain Hiram Cox, after battling for months with the determination of the Burmese Court to treat him as an inferior and as a suppliant for its favour, returned to India with a ruined reputation. Five years later the true facts of his position were understood, when Colonel Symes, on his second visit to Burma, and notwithstanding the circumstance with which he came, was detained for forty days, totally unnoticed by the Court,



THE BIG BELL UNDER ITS NEW ROOF

at an island near this Pagoda of Mingun, on which corpses were burnt and criminals were executed.

Bo-daw-paya, the builder of the pagoda, which even in its unfinished state is the biggest mass of brickwork in the world, was a man of immense ambitions, scarcely one of which he realised. Of his career some account



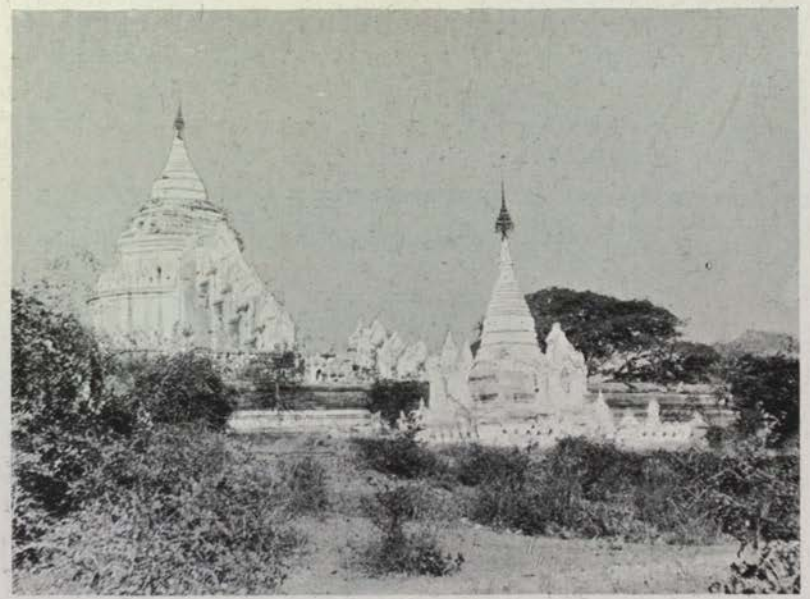
THE BELL IN ITS OLD PLACE

is given in the chapter on Amarapura, which he founded. But it was not of mundane conquests alone that this Napoleonic personage was avid. "He thought," says the pious Father San Germano, "to make himself a god. With this view, and in imitation of Godama, who, before being advanced to the rank of a divinity, had abandoned

From a native painting

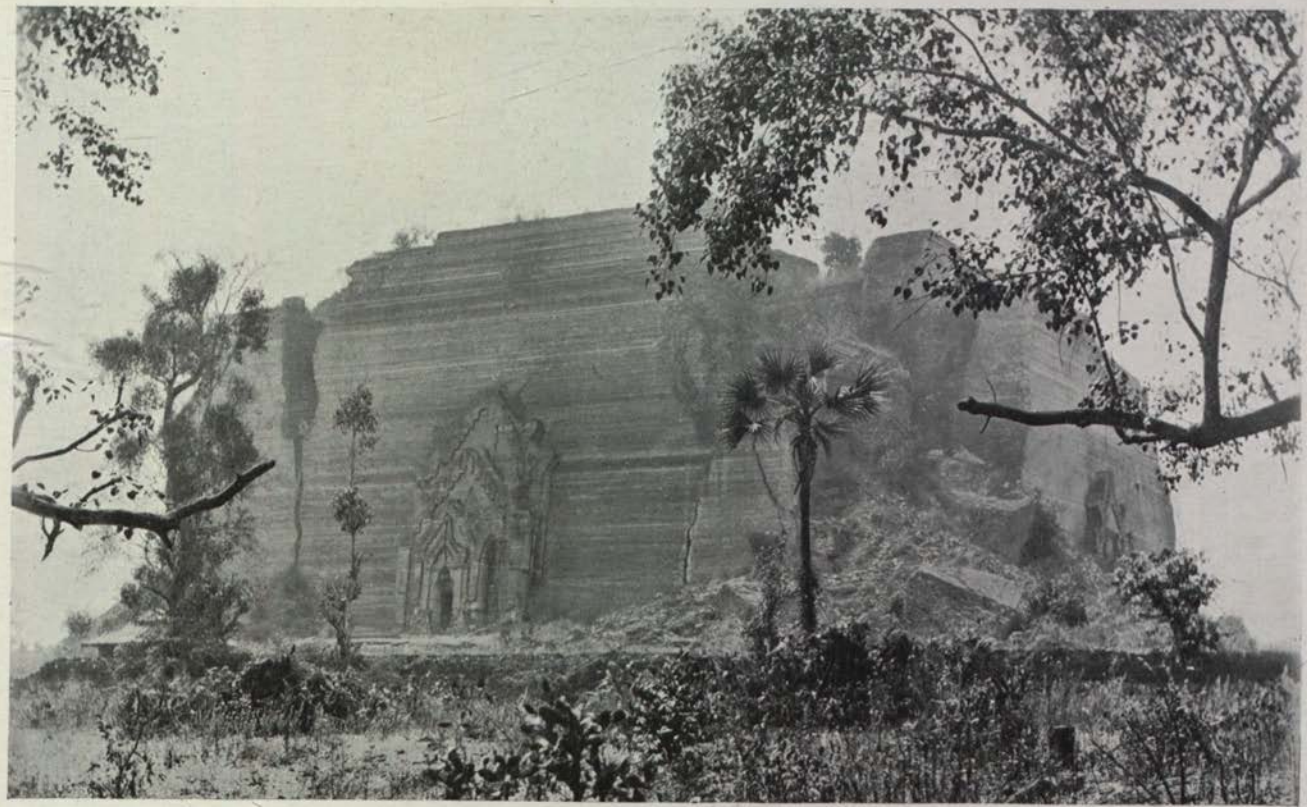
FRESCOES AT SAGAING

the royal palace together with all his wives and concubines, and retired into solitude, Badonsachen (Bo-daw-paya) withdrew himself from the palace to Menton (Mingun) where for many years he had been employed in constructing a pagoda, the largest in the Empire. Here he held various conferences with the most considerable and learned Talapoins, in which he endeavoured to persuade



A PAGODA AT MINGUN

them that the five thousand years assigned for the observance of the law of Godama were lapsed, and that he himself was the god who was to appear after that period, and to abolish the ancient law in substituting his own. But to his great mortification many of the Talapoins undertook to demonstrate the contrary; and this, combined with his love of power and his



THE GREAT ABORTION

impatience under the denial of the luxuries of the seraglio, quickly disabused him of his godhead and drove him back to his palace."

One difficulty of his people in recognising in him a reincarnation of the gentle founder of their faith will be better understood on a further perusal of the Padre's narrative.

"He has so far," he says, "outstripped his predecessors in barbarity, that whoso but hears of it must

FROM THE RUINS

shudder with horror. His very countenance is the index of a mind ferocious and inhuman in the highest degree. Immense is the number of those whom he has sacrificed to his ambition upon the most trivial offences; and it would not be an exaggeration to assert that during his reign more victims have fallen by the hand of the executioner than by the sword of the common enemy."

An earthquake in 1839 rent his unfinished pagoda in twain. A pathway has been worn along the rent by the feet of many climbers, and up this one may

now climb to its summit. In clear weather it offers a great view of the river and its ceaseless life; of the spires and turrets of Mandalay and the blue walls of the Shan highlands beyond. Immediately behind it there rise in tiers the barren hills of Sagaing. The ruins of two colossal leogryphs, one ninety-five feet in height, stand between it and the river. These also the earthquake destroyed. They are in keeping with this place of gigantic but abortive conceptions.

BRONZE FIGURE BROUGHT FROM ARACAN BY BO-DAW-PAYA

Within the pagoda there lie buried, according to the Royal Chronicle of Burma, 1,500 figures and images of gold, 2,534 of silver, and 36,947 of "other materials." But lest the cupidity of the traveller should be roused, let him read the narrative of Hiram Cox, who was present for his sins when these valuables were being stored within the brickwork.

From a painting by Saya Chone

KING THIBAW'S MASSACRE OF THE ROYAL PRINCES AT MANDALAY

The victims were beaten on the throat with a bamboo, to avoid the shedding of Royal blood, and then buried in red velvet sacks. All this was according to established precedent

BOOK II

The Ancient Capitals of the Burmese Race

Tagoung—
Pagān

THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

CHAPTER I

I. TAGOUNG

A Maid-of-Honour

TAGOUNG! The name has been known these twenty centuries, and yet it is a very little place to-day. Under the high mudbanks where the cropped grass grows brown in the dry winter weather, there runs the river, ruffled a little by the morning breeze. Its farther shore is bounded by a line of hills that prevent its wandering from its path. They are hills of a red and misty purple, somewhat forbidding in suggestion. They shut out the world to the west from sight, and curtail, for one who would look upon it, the glory of the sunset. They are like a prison-wall; and in this no fit company for a noble city. One can imagine a King of Tagoung wishing to cut a passage through them to the open world beyond.

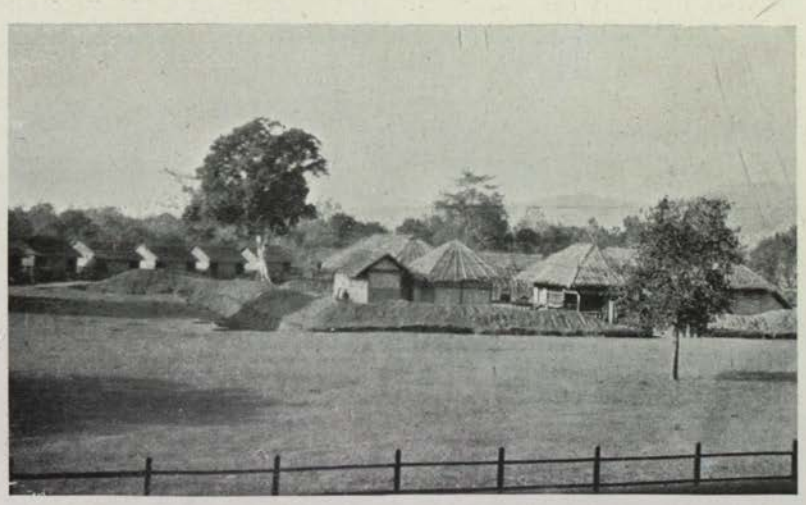
Upon their crests there are two pagodas built by Alompra. Save for these pagodas the view, as one looks out upon the river from the ruins of the ancient city, is the same view that met the eyes of its people during the centuries of its prime. Yet it is hard to

realise this. Out on the grassy levels to-day the ponies of the village are browsing peacefully, and one can hear them whinny, and see them whisk the flies away with their tails. Overhead the crows are busy in the rich drooping foliage of the palms and amidst the sheen of the wild plum-trees. On the slopes of a water-channel which leads down to the river, an elephant with a clanging chain is at work on great logs of timber that are destined for the pavement of a London thoroughfare. One can hear the Military Police, men of the same breed as the traditional builders of Tagoung, drilling outside the stockade which lies under the Court-house windows, and the sleepy air is broken by the quick call of English words of command, "As you were," "Quick March—Forward." And up and down before the strong-room in which the Government revenue is lodged, a sentry with fixed bayonet marches. You would not know him in his boots and khaki uniform, and the little forage cap on his cropped head, for one of the gay silken children of the soil. He looks much more like a Gurkha warrior, and so harks back to an ancient kinship, and an ancestry that the generations have not effaced.

A little further away, under the shade of a great fig-tree, there rise the brown, grass-grown walls of the old city. A herd of goats feeds here through the day, and the small kids gambol in the sunlight. Under the shady tamarinds there is a cluster of mat houses, and the spire of a white pagoda. The village cocks crow lustily through the sultry day, and hens with their broods scratch on the outskirts. Now and then only a man passes by; now and then only the voice of one singing cleaves the somnolent air. It is a still place, calm, for the most part, as the

passionless river that flows past it. "Quick march! Forward!"—but it has come but a little way these two thousand years.

There is a pathway which leads through the old wall, whose height and strength are still noticeable, its large bricks well preserved. The path, cloven by cart-wheels, strikes through the dense jungle which now hides the site of the city. We, that is to say, Moung Pu the magistrate,



THE POLICE POST AT TAGOUNG

the village headman, and the Myo Sayé or village writer, with followers, take our way along this road talking of the past, and presently we turn aside into a narrower path, the Myo Sayé having somewhat to say of a moat on the far side. But the jungle thickens and we come to a pause. To show the way I make a rough passage through the jungle for some twenty yards. The man who has followed me turns back to make a detour, and so stops dead. Directly in his way there lies a snake,

and five seconds earlier I had stepped over it where it lay. Its body is swollen and knotty as though it had just fed. The whole party, now gathered in its neighbourhood, speak of it in awed voices. It is a cobra, but for a cobra it is singularly white and pale, and it is five feet long. Its lithe, evil head is lifted half an inch off the leaf-strewn path, its dark, beady eyes are alive with attention. It lies here in full view of us all, knowing that it is surrounded. None of those who are with me will attempt its life. As I make for it at last the spell is broken. A flash, and it is gone!

The Myo Sayé's face is written large with horror, and when I ask him presently of old Tagoung, I am met with a vague allusion to a princess who married a snake. The snake, he says, and his eyes look confused and frightened, has ever since watched over the ancient city, and it kills any new king who comes to it. The same snake destroys any who speak too freely of Tagoung. "Any one who would dare to tell the story of Tagoung, would need to tell it with great precision. Any slip would be fatal to the teller." Near the village there is a curious wooden chapel, built over a figure of the guardian spirit of Tagoung, and of this personage the people are equally reticent. It is clear that to-day, at any rate, they are all in the toils of some sinister superstition.

As we continue our way through the desolation of the jungle, all who are with me, from Moung Pu the magistrate to the humblest follower, suddenly come to a pause, and take off their sandals and carry them in their hands. We have reached the traditional precincts of the pagoda, which presently stands before us. From its summit the eye rests

upon a wilderness of brown jungle, the sinuous gleam of the river, and the mountains shutting off the sunset beyond. Down in the narrow path by which we have come the whole of the Burmese party are deep in prayer, their hands folded, and their heads bent in attitudes of intense devotion, and the only sound that breaks the stillness of the place is the sound of their voices as they pray.

On a stone pedestal beside the gateway there lie fragments of bricks seventeen hundred years old, with effigies of the Buddha upon them, and inscriptions in the Indian (Gupta) character. They have been taken from a hole dug into one of the smaller pagodas, and in a chapel not far off there is a figure of the Buddha whose face is that of an Indian, and not of a Burman. This is readily admitted by the Myo Sayé, who draws down his face with his hands to indicate the difference.

Long after we have come back, and I sit alone in the verandah of the Court House vaguely measuring the movement of the world by the passing of the stars, the stillness of Tagoung is broken by the chaunting of the villagers at prayer. Their voices are followed by the clanging of bells of different notes, at increasing distances, and the night air is made vibrant with their music. Long after the last stroke has sounded from the big bell its voice palpitates on in the stilly night. It is no new sensation, but I am the only white man in Tagoung.

Of the origin of Tagoung, of its history, of the causes which made of it a great walled city twenty-seven centuries ago, which have left it to-day a wilderness, rather than the capital of a mighty nation, little is known. There are legends, and there are the ruins. The former tell of

Hindu exiles, under the leadership of a Kshathriya prince, who came over the mountains which divide India from Burma and founded the city of Tagoung. The latter confirm this story. The bricks which are found in the old pagodas relate to the first two centuries after Christ, and it seems certain that they were made by Indian workmen, and that they were made on the spot. On a stone slab dated 416 A.D. it is recorded that Gopala the Prince left his original home, Hastinapura, on the Ganges, and after various successful wars with the Mlech-chhas founded new Hastinapura (or Tagoung) on the Irrawaddy. Very little has been done to extract from these jungle-covered ruins the secret they hold of the early history of the Burmese race. Tagoung is believed to have fallen before the advent of the Shan, who entered Burma about two thousand years ago, and eventually from the Salwin valley spread over the whole of the north country.

Of the old cities there are really two, old Pagān and Tagoung, and it is from old Pagān that these lines are written. Its walled area is small and of irregular oval outline, very narrow at the south end. The Talawa creek bounds it on the north, the Irrawaddy on the west, and a moat on the south and east. The local tradition is that the river formerly flowed far away to the east of the city, and that there was little more than a back-water where now the main stream flows. But the irregular outline of the city wall on the west suggests that the river must at the time of its building have flowed immediately under it. Old Pagān was founded after the destruction of Tagoung, by a band of fresh immigrants from India during the lifetime of the Buddha.

THE RELICS OF A BYGONE DAY

The ruins of Tagoung are far greater in extent and more regular in outline. The old wall runs parallel with the river for more than a mile. Between it and the water there is a long line of great trees of the noblest proportions, whose drooping boughs overhang the river. The views here of the copper-coloured river, of the red-blue hills beyond with lights and shadows perpetually at play upon them, and on the near bank, of gnarled and splendid trees, are of the most beautiful description. It is a delightful experience to follow this immemorial pathway for the first time, under the ramparts of the city, till at last the great long wall comes to an end on the river face and turns sharply inland.

II. TIGYAING ON THE HILL

There is a view from the Hill of Tigyaing of the kind that ties men's hearts to this country. It is a typical view of vast reaches of woodland and water and blue shadowy hills. The village that lies at its foot strikes the brave human note. It, also, is typical of the country. Rows of brown-roofed cottages, clusters of green palms, spires of pagodas and monasteries white and grey and gold, the great river at its threshold, and facing it and behind it, mountain ranges that are no more than a name to most, yet beautiful alike for their splendid form and colour. Being far-withdrawn they leave to this settlement the sense of space, which the river winding its way into the mists of north and south lifts to a splendid mystery. One looks upon the brown roofs of a little village, but one looks also upon the site of cities, that were once

great and famous and are now dust, and one wonders at the slow progress of the world.

On the hill, lifted above the crumbling walls of an old fortress which is attributed to Chinese invaders of Burma, there is the traveller's rest-house from which these sights are to be seen. Above it there is a pagoda, in whose court there are stone inscriptions, one of which

THE VIEW FROM TIGYAING HILL

records the bestowal of "the great sweet-voice of the one-lakh-emerald Pagoda" by a long list of subscribers, including the Myowun and Myo Thugyi of Mya-daung; old officials of the kings of Burma who have passed away. The other has to do with the consecration of a Thein or Hall of Ordination about the year 1216 B.E. The bell has been taken away to a monastery in the village since the precincts of the pagoda were occupied as

barracks by a detachment of the Military Police. Tigyaing was of old a place of some consequence, and there are still some Yunnanese traders from Momein settled in the village; but its prosperity has declined since the construction of the railway to Katha and Myitkina. The large tract of country between it and the Aracan mountains was of old served by Tigyaing and other places on the river, but the railway now brings all it needs to its doors. The immemorial highway of the land has found a rival.

Facing Tigyaing on the further shore is Mya-daung, also now a place of little consequence, but in the days of the kings of Burma the capital of a province. The Amyat-Chaung enters the Irrawaddy above it, and a large section of the lesser river is enclosed in bamboo palisades, parallel to each other at intervals of three hundred yards. In these spaces the fish crowd in thousands. The scene as one comes upon it of an afternoon is exceedingly pictorial. The still green water reflects the pattern of the palisades, the banks on either hand are clothed in the dense primeval forest, and the river, curving down from the foot of the hill country, broadens below into the splendour of the Irrawaddy. So secret is the little river's course, that no hint of its presence is to be had from the platform of the Pagoda of Mya-daung which is lifted up immediately above it. Yet in its season, this still, secluded, and beautiful spot awakens to an indescribable animation. The fishermen then make their haul, and the banks are lined with interested spectators of the sport afoot. The air is patterned with the wheeling flight of the grey gulls, which share the harvest with their human associates. Twenty

canoes, each with a paddler at the stern and a netter at the prow, take their way across the water. The fish trapped in the dead water between the palisades leap continuously into the air, and the keen-eyed gulls drop with shrieks after them into the water. The fishermen fling their black nets before them, and let them sink with their leaden weights. Then as the canoes are paddled slowly away, they haul in the line, easily, hand over hand, till it is all gathered in, and the dark funnel of the net slowly rises to the surface, a-twinkle with the silver fish that gasp and flutter in its toils. Fish near the palisades, and in the narrow enclosures, leap wildly into the air in their efforts to escape—such splendid leaps as would rejoice the heart of an athlete; and sometimes they succeed in leaping the barrier imposed between them and freedom; at others they fall, to the loud laughter of the lookers-on, into the moving canoes of the fishers; and at times they drop into the palisades, where they are caught in their folds or impaled upon the sharp-pointed stakes. Some are minnows three inches long, and others are tritons of fifty pounds which leap as high as a man.

A WINDOW IN A MONASTERY

Thus it is that though the pomp and circumstance of Rule have passed, the fascination of the primitive life still lingers at Mya-daung.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAGĀN

FROM A NOTE BY MR. J. H. MARSHALL

Director-General of Archæology to the Government of India

Pagān is a spot that is entitled to more fame than any other in Burma; for Pagān was the capital of the Burmese Empire when it reached the zenith of its power; it is to Pagān that the religion of the people owes its greatest debt; here that their art achieved its highest triumph; and here that age has imparted to their monuments a beauty unequalled at any other site in Burma. Yet the city has attracted singularly little attention from the world at large; for few travellers visit it, and fewer still have attempted to narrate its romantic history or to describe its magnificent remains. Its early history is wrapped in uncertainty, and it is not until the eleventh century A.D. that the fables of the Burmese Chroniclers give place to more substantial fact. Pagān then appears on our horizon in the fulness of its power—as the capital of Burma and the conqueror of the Talaing kingdom of the south. From that time forward it is the foremost state in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, and maintains this position unimpaired for two and a half centuries, consolidating its strength meanwhile and extending its influence towards China and India. Then, with dramatic suddenness, it falls before the invading hosts of Kublai Khan, its empire is broken up, and the city itself becomes feudatory to the Chinese Emperor.

But for us to-day the history of its political supremacy is of less real import than the rôle it played in Buddhism. For, by a fortunate coincidence, this city rose to eminence at the time when the sun of Buddhism was setting in India, and she absorbed much of the vitality of the religion that was sapped from the older country. Anawrata, her king, was to Burma what Asoka was to India, and his court offered sanctuary and welcome to Buddhist monks from every quarter. Driven by force of circumstances from their old homes, or lured by the attractive prospect which life at the Burmese capital held out for them, they came in numbers from all parts of the empire and surrounding countries, bringing with them their treasured relics and their books, their local lore and their traditions, and they established at Pagān a religious community composed, perhaps, of more heterogeneous elements than the world of Buddhism had ever known. This cosmopolitan character of the people is reflected with striking clearness in the monumental remains which they have left behind them. Pagān, in fact, epitomises for us in its remains the story of early Buddhism, and many a chapter of that story may yet be illuminated and illustrated from its hidden treasures.

THE FAR SOUTH OF PAGĀN

CHAPTER II

PAGĀN

I. ITS STORY

A Minister of the King

ON the day of the death of Thupyinnya, twenty-seventh King of Prome, in the year 84 A.D., a countrywoman's corn-sieve was carried away by an impetuous wind. The countrywoman followed it, crying out, "Oh, my corn-sieve! oh, my corn-sieve!"

The citizens, disturbed by this clamour and not knowing what had happened, began likewise to cry, "Army of the corn-sieve! soldiers of the corn-sieve!"

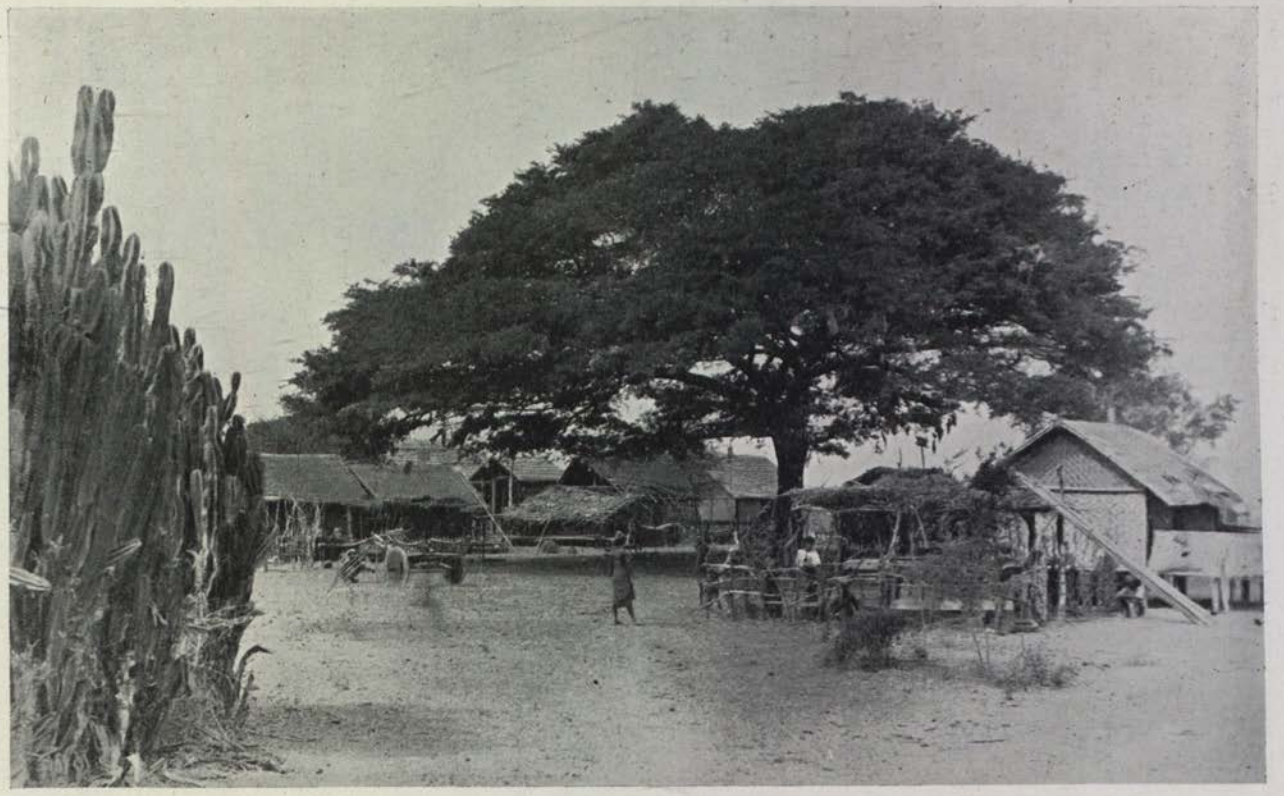
A great confusion consequently arose, and all the citizens were divided into three parties, who afterwards became three different nations, the Pyu, the Kanran, and the Thet. The first took up arms against the second, and were victorious,

but afterwards, being agitated by internecine discord, they were again divided into three parties, one of which put itself under the government of the Prince Thamôk-darit, nephew of Thupyinnya. This prince led them to a place called Taung-nyo, whence the Talaings expelled him three years later. He then took shelter at Padaung and Mindon,[1] but was driven thence by the Aracanese; upon which he passed into the kingdom of Pagān, which consisted of a confederacy of nineteen villages.

While he there reigned, as he was destitute of virtue and power, he was compelled to feed swine, tigers, great birds, and other animals of the forest, which had rebelled against him. In progress of time the daughter of a Prince of Dragons, having married the Son of the Sun, bore him a child called Pyumindi, who lent his assistance to the King of Pagān, and tamed all his rebellious animals. After this he took in marriage the daughter of Thamôk-darit and succeeded him in his kingdom. Thamôk-darit was born on a Sunday, and at his death a great fiery globe, of the diameter of a large waggon-wheel, fell from heaven.

In this innocent fashion is the most splendid empire that Burma has known ushered by its Burmese chroniclers into history. Like many popular fables this one enshrines some fragment of the truth, and we may take it to mean that when the power of Prome was broken by civil war and invasion from Thatôn, the capital of the Môn race, a section of its people, after some

[1] For some account of Mindon, from which Mindon Min, last but one of the Alompra Kings, took his title, and where since his death his spirit has taken up its abode, see *The Silken East*.



THIRI-PYITSAYA

misadventures, found a new home in the neighbourhood of Pagān. It was not a settled home at first because of troublesome neighbours of a lower grade of civilisation, but intermarriage eventually smoothed the way to peace.

For seven hundred years the new settlement continued to grow, its capital being moved by the seventh king of the dynasty from Yun-hlut-kyun to Thiri-pyitsaya ("the City of Power and Glory"), and by the twelfth king of the dynasty to Thamati ("the Seat of Kings").

Little is known of the history of this period. In the year 639 A.D. the King of Thamati with the help of Hindu astrologers established the new era, by which time in Burma is still reckoned; but it was not till the year 847 A.D. that the city, whose splendid ruins line to-day the banks of the Irrawaddy, came into existence.

It was founded by Pyinbya, thirty-third king of the dynasty of Thamôk-darit, and lasted for more than four hundred years, reaching its zenith in the reigns of Anawrata, Kyansittha, Alaung-sithu, and Narapati-sithu between the years 1010 and 1204 A.D. It was during these two centuries that the Burmese race achieved its finest efforts after architecture of the grand order, and the relics of this period are the chief glory of the desolate city.

Concerning the origin of Anawrata it is written that Kyaung-byu, grandson of the founder of Pagān, was a servant in the house of a usurper who in the year 957 filled the throne of his ancestors. Taking advantage of a belief amongst the people that a prince of the blood-royal would appear in their midst, Kyaung-byu

clothed himself in royal robes, and, with a crown upon his head and other insignia of royalty about him, rode boldly into the town of Pagān, where he was received with acclamation. The usurper, rushing out to see what had happened, slipped at the top of the palace steps, fell headlong, and was picked up dead. This timely decease removed the only obstacle that stood in the way of the Prince, who immediately declared himself King of Pagān, and married the three chief queens of the deceased usurper. The third of these bore him a son, who became famous in history as Anawrata-zaw, the Paladin of the Burmese race.

Anawrata's greatest exploit was the conquest of Thatôn, and it was this conquest and the motive from which it proceeded, that gave Pagān that bias towards architectural splendour and religious zeal which is written in vivid letters on all that remains of it to-day. Anawrata's purpose in invading Thatôn was to secure the text of the Buddhist scriptures it possessed, and to Anawrata, inspired by the Southern Canon, is given the credit of establishing Buddhism in a pure form at Pagān.

The empire of Anawrata attained to no mean proportions. It extended from the gulf of Martaban to the borders of Southern China, and from the Bay of Bengal to Cambodia. His zeal for relics led him into communication with Ceylon, and his wife was the daughter of an Indian prince. His name is still green in the memories of the people, as though he had lived but yesterday.

He was eventually succeeded by Kyansittha, who was

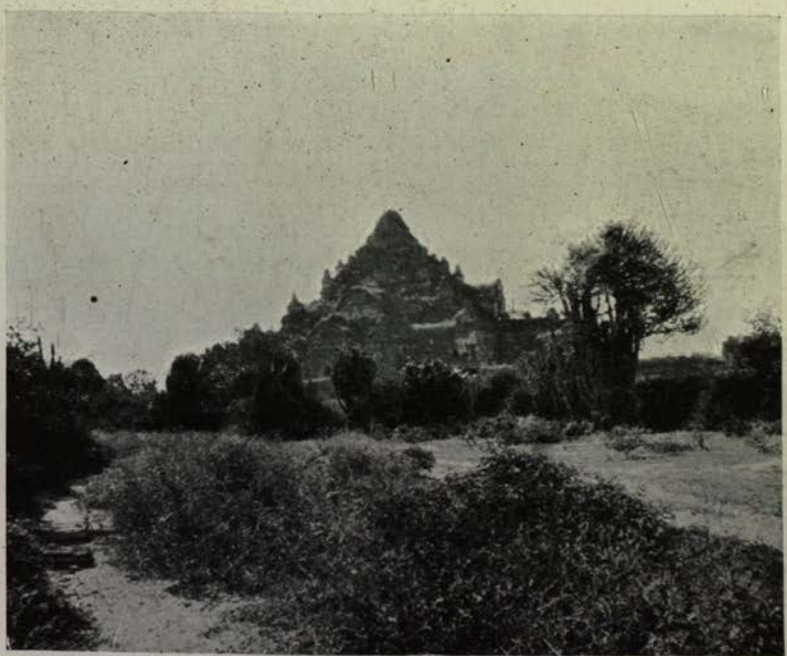
the fruit of this marriage. Himself half an Indian, there can be little doubt that Kyansittha's court and capital were thronged with his mother's countrymen. One of these was a prince, the son of the Raja of Pateik-kaya. The Prince, we are told, desired to marry the daughter of Kyansittha, "but by the advice of the nobles this alliance was publicly disallowed, lest the country should become Kula, or foreign." Kyansittha, a contemporary of William the Conqueror, was succeeded by his grandson Alaung-sithu, the builder of the That-byin-nyu and Shwégu-gyi Pagodas, in the latter of which as an aged man he was smothered to death by his son and successor Narathu.

The name of the King Narathu is associated with the Dhamma-yan-gyi Pagoda, the largest building in Pagān. He began his career by murdering his father and his elder brother, and ended it at the hands of emissaries sent by an Indian prince, the Raja of Pateik-kaya, whose daughter, the widow of his father, he had slain.

His son, King Narapati-sithu, came to the throne in the year 1167, after murdering his brother, and during the thirty-seven years of his reign he built the Gawdaw-palin and Sulamani Pagodas. Pagān was now at the height of its splendour. All its great pagodas had come into existence, and its fame as a capital of the Buddhist world was established. "It hospitably received," says Forchhammer, "the scattered remains of fugitive Buddhists from all parts of India. From the tenth to the thirteenth century it was the most celebrated centre for Buddhist religious life and learning in Indo-

China. Fraternities from Ceylon, from the conquered Hamsavati (Pegu), from Siam, the Shan States, Nepal, and China sojourned in Pagān, and King Narapati-sithu assigned to each fraternity, or sect, separate quarters where they were to reside."

Narapati-sithu was succeeded by his son Zeya-theinka,



THE DHAMMA-YAN-GYI PAGODA

who built the Bawdi Pagoda, a base imitation of the temple at Buddha-Gaya. Pagān was now upon the eve of her dissolution. Zeya-theinka died in 1227 A.D. Twenty-one years later there came to the throne Nara-thi-ha-pati, known to this day as "He who fled from the Chinese." This man, whose sobriquet has made him the laughing-stock of Burma for seven hundred years,

was a luxurious weakling, unfitted to sustain the honour of the great empire built up by his predecessors; and it was in his reign that the blow was delivered from which Pagān never recovered. An episode in the history of the country so important as this, has not escaped the attention of its chroniclers, and one may pause here to consider their account of it.

The Royal Chronicle of Ava (translated by Colonel Henry Burney) relates that in the year 1281 A.D. the Emperor of China sent ten nobles escorted by 1,000 horsemen to demand a renewal of the tribute that was first paid in the reign of King Anawrata. The King, enraged at this demand, and at the disrespectful manner in which it was presented, ordered that the envoys should all be instantly put to death. Then one of the Ministers, named Nanda Pyit-si, respectfully addressed the King, saying:

"Although the envoys of the Emperor of China are ignorant of what is due to a king, and have conducted themselves in a disrespectful manner, yet if it seemeth well to your glorious Majesty, a report of their conduct should be made to the Emperor of China. To put ambassadors to death has not been the custom during the whole line of our kings. It will be proper, then, for your Majesty to forbear."

The King replied saying:

"They have treated with disrespect such a sovereign as I am; put them to death."

Thereupon the officers of the Government, fearing the royal displeasure, put the whole of the mission to death, without a single exception.

PAGODA PRECINCTS

When the Emperor of China received intelligence of the execution of his envoys he was exceeding angry, and, collecting an army of at least six millions of foot, sent them down to attack Pagān. As soon as the King Nara-thi-ha-pati heard of the coming of this force, he placed under the Generals Nanda Pyit-si and Yanda Pyit-si 400,000 soldiers and numerous elephants and horses, with orders to attack the Chinese army. The two Generals marched to the city of Nga-Saung-Gyan, and after putting its walls, ditch, and fortifications in a proper state of defence, opposed the Chinese army at the foot of the Bhamo river, killing during three months so many of that army that not a grass-cutter even for its horses and elephants remained. The Emperor of China, however, kept reinforcing his army, and replacing those who were killed, by sending two hundred thousand men when he heard of the loss of one hundred thousand men, and four hundred thousand when he heard of two hundred thousand.

Hence the Burman army was at last overpowered with fatigue, and the Chinese crossed the river and destroyed Nga-Saung-Gyan.

When this news was conveyed to the King, he summoned a council of his Ministers and addressed them as follows:

"The walls of the city of Pagān are low, and enclose too small a space to permit all the soldiers and elephants and horses to remain comfortably within. I propose therefore to build a strong wall, extending from the eastward, from the village of Palin, on the upper part of the river, straight down to the southward, taking in the village

SUNSET AT PAGĀN

of Ywatha. But as it is not possible just now to procure bricks and stones quickly, if we break down some of the temples, and use the bricks, we shall be able to complete this wall most expeditiously." Accordingly, 1,000 large arched temples, 10,000 smaller ones, and 4,000 square temples were destroyed. During this operation, a sheet of copper with a royal prediction inscribed on it was found in one of the temples. The words were as follows:

"The city of Pagān in the time of the father of twins, the Chinese destroying, will be destroyed." The King thereupon made inquiries among the royal women, and learnt that a young concubine had just given birth to twins.

As His Majesty now believed that even if he built the intended fortifications he would be unable to defend them, he caused 1,000 boats with figure-heads, and 1,000 war-boats to be made ready, and embarked in them all his gold and silver and treasures; 1,000 cargo-boats also he loaded with paddy and rice; in 1,000 state boats he embarked all his Ministers and officers, and in the gilded state boats his concubines and female attendants. But as even these could not accommodate all the royal concubines and female attendants, who were very numerous, the King said, "These women and servants are too numerous to be all embarked in the boats, and if we leave them here the Chinese will seize and take possession of them. Tie their hands and feet together, therefore, and throw them into the river."

The King's teacher however observed, "In the

whole circle of animal existence the state of man is the most difficult of attainment, and to attain that state during the time of a Buddha, is also most difficult. There can be no occasion for your Majesty to commit the evil deed of throwing these people into the water. Such an act will be for ever talked of even among kings, and it will be registered in the records of the

THE LAST OF THE GRAND GATEWAY OF PAGĀN

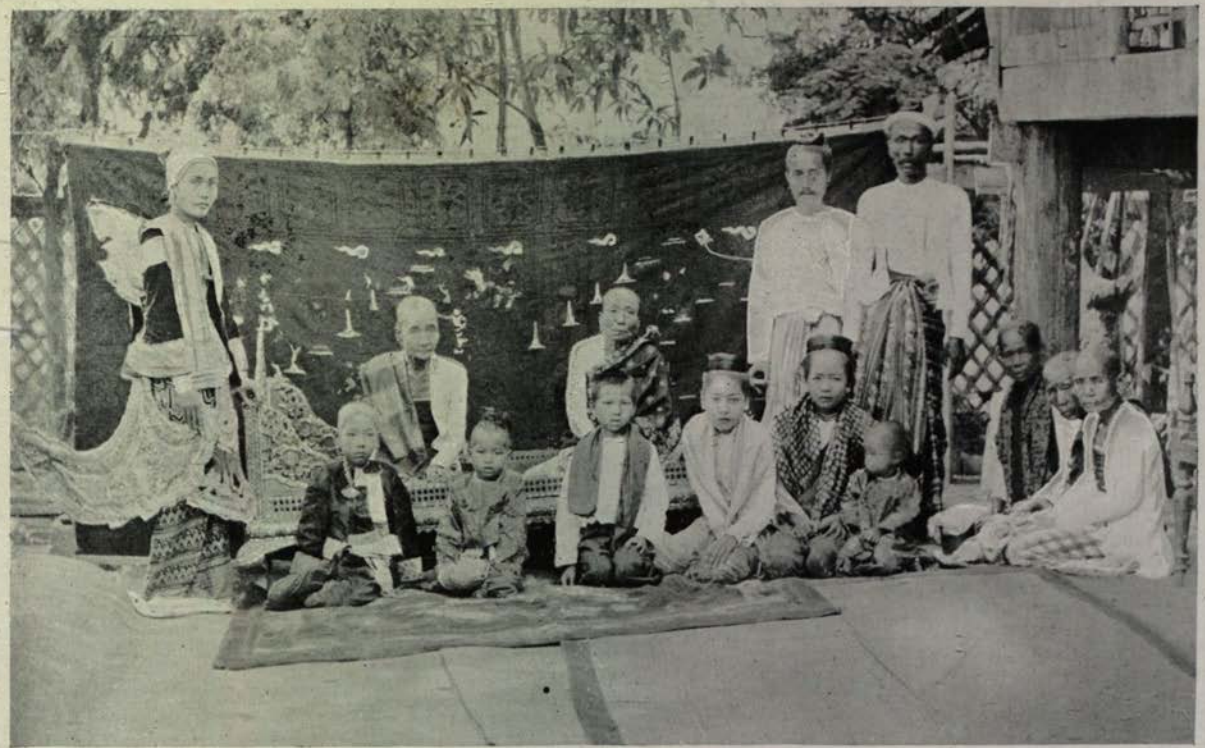
Empire. Let your Majesty therefore grant permission for any person to take such of the royal female attendants as cannot be embarked in the royal boats, and by so doing, your Majesty will be said not only to have granted them their lives, but to have afforded them protection."

The King replied, "Very true," and set at liberty three hundred of the female servants of the interior of the palace, who were taken and carried away by different

inhabitants of the city. The King then embarked in his gilded accommodation boat, and retired to the Talaing city of Bassein.

From this fantastic account, mingled in the original with Homeric episodes of conflict between the Nats of the contending armies, one gathers some idea of the confusion that befel Pagān on the approach of the invader. The historian, with courtly tact, envelops the conduct of the King in fine phrases; yet it is apparent throughout that he behaved with pusillanimity. After the retreat of the Chinese army from Pagān, he bethought him of returning to the capital he had abandoned, and it is recorded that on one occasion when his cooks served up a dinner of only one hundred and fifty courses instead of the three hundred to which he was accustomed, he covered his face with his hands and wept, saying, "I am become a poor man." The poor sybarite was not destined to reach his capital alive. On his arrival off Prome, he was forced by his son Thihathu, governor of the city, to take a poisoned meal, from which he died. The Shwé-bontha Pagoda, whose dark spire rises high above the waters of the Irrawaddy under the hills of Prome, reminds the traveller to this day of the deed of the parricide Thihathu, brother of Kyaw-swa, fifty-third and last king of the dynasty of Thamôk-darit.

Of the fall and destruction of Pagān, there is no other record than this in Burmese history. Marco Polo's account, with its army of gleemen and jugglers, is equally fantastic; but the Burmese dates are corro-



THE PAGĀN QUEEN AND HER SUITE (1885)

borated by the dates given in the Chinese annals, and if there be some doubt as to whether Pagān was actually destroyed by the true Mongol horde of Kublai Khan, or by his advanced Shan auxiliaries, there is none at all that the old Empire of Pagān came to an end in the closing years of the thirteenth century, as the result of an invasion from China.

Thereafter it was parcelled out amongst Shan adventurers and its glory waned.

Some five hundred and fifty years later a momentary gleam of history fell upon Pagān, when from the shelter of its unnumbered ruins Zeyathura, the Burmese general, endeavoured to resist the British advance. But his troops refused to fight, and took to flight on the first assault. A post on the river-bank was entered by the British army at the charge. The Burmese who occupied it precipitated themselves into the river, in which three hundred were bayoneted or drowned.

Of Pagān at the zenith of its glory it is not easy at this day to form a just impression. If it be judged by the number and magnificence of its pagodas, which cover an area of 100 square miles, the city in its prime, early in the thirteenth century, must have been one of the most remarkable capitals the world has seen. But in Burma the finest architecture, in the form of buildings devoted to religious use, is apt to exist side by side with the humblest kind of secular civilisation and prosperity. And it is more than probable that the people who built the Ananda, the That-byin-nyu and the Gaw-daw-palin were a people of mat houses and small means. For the same reason it would be a mistake to

suppose that Pagān was merely a holy city, even if the moated walls and great gateways of the inner city were not still in existence to testify to its secular character.

That Pagān was a great capital we know, from the

NYAUNGU VILLAGE

extent and duration of the empire ruled by its kings; that it was steeped in an atmosphere of religion can scarcely be doubted by any one who has looked upon its ruins, or glanced at the inscriptions which record the endowments and benefactions of its kings and citizens. These inscriptions, with all their aspirations after

spiritual advancement, with all their lists of monasteries and temples, of dedicated slaves and lands, and all their elaborate care for the continued preservation of the religion, convey a singular impression of pious zeal and devotion.

With its kings and its nobles, its communities of monks drawn from every part of the Buddhist world,

FRESCOES IN A HALL OF ORDINATION AT PAGĀN

its libraries, its monastery roofs and gilded spires, its thronging people, painters and artisans, architects and musicians, slaves and lictors, footmen and horsemen, Pagān at its climax must have presented a spectacle of extraordinary variety and grandeur.

"Pagān," wrote the Queen Pwazaw in the year 1242 A.D., "Pagān is called so, because it is the most pleasant and beautiful of all kingdoms. It is also called Arimaddana because it is inhabited by people who are warlike and brave and are able to vanquish their foes,

who dread even the sound of its name. Its people always enjoy immunity from danger and are free from pain. They are well versed in every art and possess various industrial appliances. The country is full of useful things, the people are wealthy, and the revenue enormous. The kingdom may therefore be said to be more desirable than the land of the Nats. It is a glorious

FRESCOES IN A HALL OF ORDINATION AT PAGĀN

kingdom, and its subjects are known to be glorious and powerful."

But the cactus and the wild plum now grow where Anawrata once ruled in magnificence and splendour, and a dusty wheel-track runs through the grand gateway of old Pagān. A slow country cart, creaking along the ruts, toils alone now in the broad sunlight where of old there marched the processions of a king, and a breath as of utter desolation broods over a city which has been dead for six hundred years.

II. TO-DAY

The steamers of to-day come to anchor at the village of Nyaung-u, which now stands for Pagān, of which in the past it was little more than a distant northern suburb. It is here that the British Magistrate resides, that justice is done, the revenue of the district collected; and Pagān, once the capital of an empire, survives now, in so far as it can be said to survive at all, as the capital of a sub-division of a District—something less than a *sous-préfecture*.

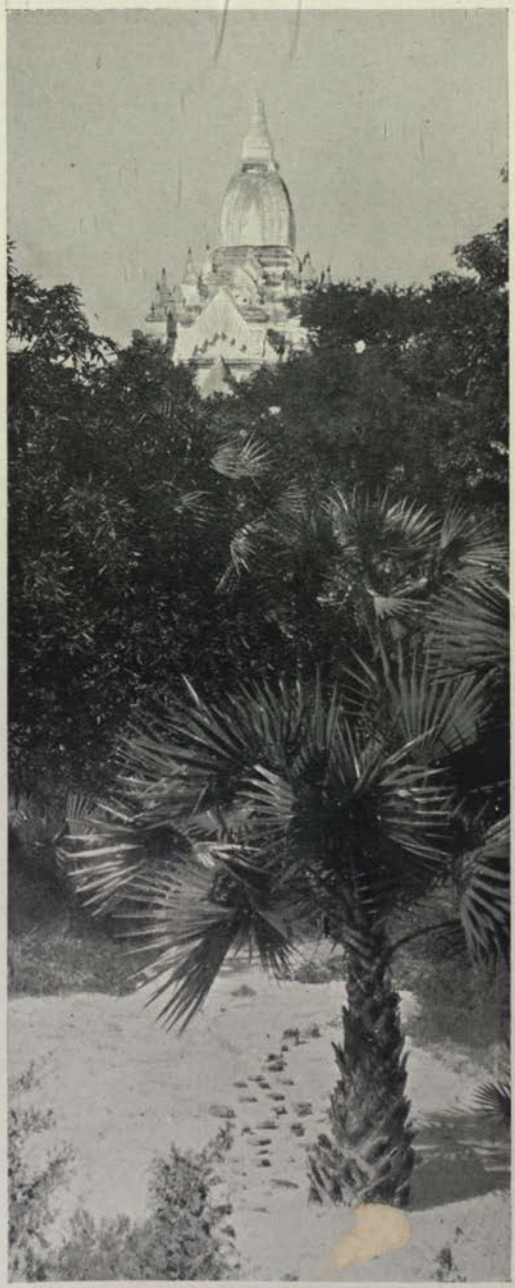
Down in the sands of the village there are mat cottages and a Post Office and a Bazaar, structures so frail and temporary that a few hours would suffice to extinguish them completely. On the neighbouring hilltops stand the Court House, the Magistrate's quarters, and the rest-house for the traveller. Here and there amidst these novelties stand the isolated dragons of once-existing pagodas, figures of Buddha which have lost nearly every trace of human semblance, and spires that are tottering to decay.

All that spreads to the north and east of these is classic soil, linked with the innermost history of Pagān. The country is a low plateau deeply intersected by ravines. In the full tide of summer there is no more desolate spot in Burma; but it has its season of beauty. When the rains come, its small acacias clothe themselves in rich foliage, and under their shelter spread meadows of yellow bloom and grassy glades.

The plateau ends abruptly in sheer cliffs overhanging the river, which swirls below. Old pagodas crown the cliffs,

and lie buried to a third of their height in the ploughed fields. Monasteries perpetuating the tradition of the past still find a beautiful seclusion in places which are shaded by groves of trees and sheltered by cliff-ledges, but which yet command wide and noble views over the vast world of the river.

The most striking object in the near vista, as one makes one's way, is the Chauk-pa-hla Pagoda, built by King Nara-pati-sithu late in the twelfth century. It presents a brave front to time, its spire of slender beauty rising high in dazzling whiteness above the sands of the rivulet and the palm-clusters below. A wooden bridge



CHAUK-PA-HLA

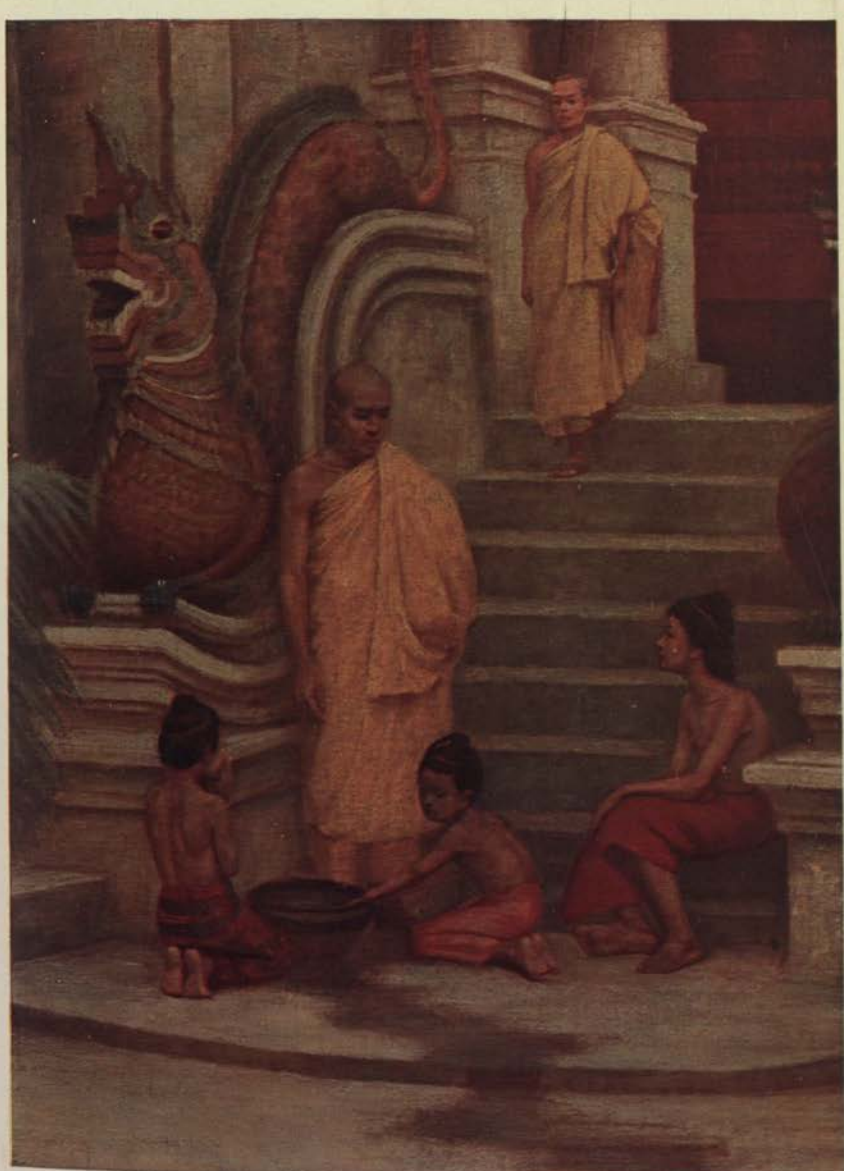
leads over the ravine to the Shwé-thabeik, the pagoda of the Golden Alms-bowl, and a small monastery which shelters at its foot. The site is one of singular beauty, and if the existing tradition of the place be true, a monastery has stood here since the days of Anawrata, when his wife, a princess of Wethali, built the pagoda, and the caves in the near cliff face were dug for the first recluse.

Few sites realise more completely the sentiment of Buddhist monastic life. From here one can see the broad river reaching away to the far shore, misty with villages and palms; one can hear the loud throbbing of the steamers, the laughter of the women in the country boats, the cries of the trackers and the polemen. When there is a festival in old Pagān the face of the river is covered with boats, full of merry people on their way: great *hnaus*, big of sail and moving with the solemn tide; racing canoes with young men at the oars, singing briskly the staccato chaunt of the Irrawaddy; and every intermediate size of dug-out and *laung-go* laden with men and women, and children of every age. The face of the river is as clear as glass, the Tangyi hills rise up from the level plain beyond like crinkled silk, and the white forms and golden spires of the distant city twinkle in the misty light. Sand-martins flutter before their homes in the yellow cliffs, and the wild pigeons sweep in wide circles overhead.

Near as the monastery is to the river, perhaps two hundred feet above the water, clearly as every feature of it can be traced by one and all of the passers-by along the great highway, there is nevertheless about it and in

From the Indian Government Survey Map

PLAN OF PAGAN



From a painting by J. R. Middleton.

FEET-WASHING AT THE ENTRANCE TO A MONASTERY.

spite of all that is visible from it, a strange and overpowering sense of remoteness and spiritual seclusion. All that passes on the river seems from here no more than an illusion; the throbbing steamers, the dreamy sailing-boats, the quick canoes, are but passing phantoms. They come and go, bodied forth one moment from the illimitable, only to be swallowed up into it the next. To the ascetic, rapt in the meditations of the spirit, they are no more than illusions bragging of reality. The night-watches and the starry firmament know them not, and the wide majestic river rolling on its way, the great earth circling through space, smile at their claims. Yet even *these* are illusions.

THE SHWÉ-THABEIK

To the recluse, the steamer captain straining with red eyes across the river spaces, the fighting man with his clatter of sword and musket and his professional ferocity, the judge weighing the mint and cummin of the secular law, executing one man, imprisoning another, are strange beings very near of vision, very far away from the great highway of life. And to them? He is at best a foolish old man, who does little to earn his own bread, or advance the world; an idle dreamer of dreams. But from here, where this silent monastery shelters under the white spire of the Shwé-thabeik,

overlooking the pageant world, it is easy to forget the existence of "realities."

A little way off, in the hollows that lie behind the monastery on its landward side, is the Kôndaw-gyi temple, with a figure of Buddha within and fine plaster work without. The latter is so fresh and beautiful where it still lingers that it is hard to believe that it is many hundred years old. Each line looks as though it might have been struck with the carving tool but a moment since. The border-device under the cornices consists of loops enclosing figures of Buddha.

Its near neighbour is the Thet-kya-muni Pagoda seven centuries old, with a figure within it seated on a throne, under a bawdi-tree, painted in green fresco. The dome is frescoed in a geometrical pattern with figures of Buddha; while the vaulted roof over the wings contains life-like vignettes of white elephants, ducks, hare, ostriches, and other creatures. The frescoes on the central vault contain vignettes of Buddha, much superior to those on the side walls. Inscriptions in square letters run beneath the frescoes. Large standing figures are painted, one on each side of the archway, which opens from the east into the central vault. The four exterior sides of the tapering cone of the temple are ornamented with plaster figures of the Buddha in semi-relief. Brick walls of solid construction make square courtyards round most of these pagodas.

Here under the dark vaulted domes of these ruined temples one may still come upon men at prayer, still hear the echo of their voices sounding the Litany of their faith. But others, and they are in the vast majority,

are completely deserted, and the stalled ox and the passing leopard shelter where worshippers once thronged.

From the Shwé-thabeik monastery a footpath leads

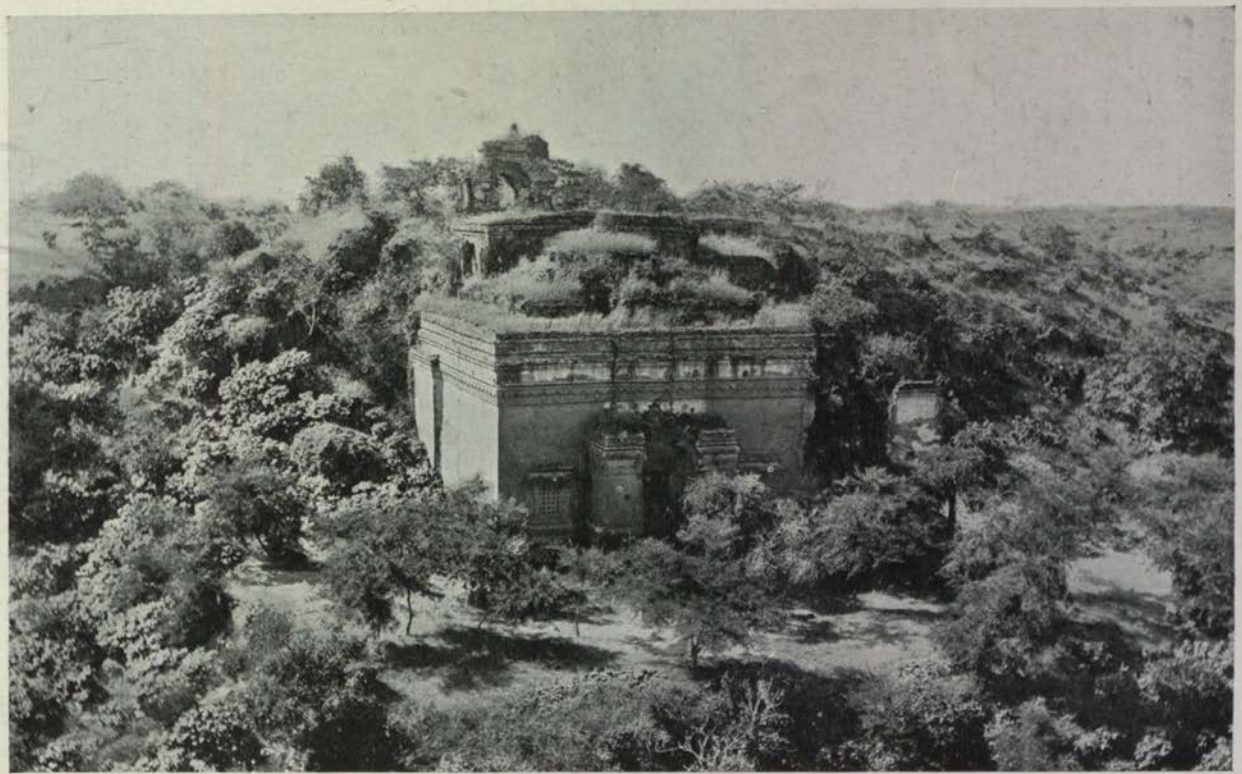
THET-KYA-MUNI PAGODA

over the uplands to the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin temple. There is something here of the character of an English down; rolling waves of land lifted high above a world of waters. Yet the analogy is borne down in the moment

of its birth by innumerable differences; by such things as silky grasses turning from green to gold, rich carpets of yellow satin bloom, sandy watercourses white as silver in the still seclusion of deep ravines, dwarf acacias laden with beans as purple as any plums of France, pink-buttoned cactuses, exuberant convolvuli spreading their maze of flowers, purple uplands in the distance climbing to the feet of Popa, blue and Vesuvian, his head amidst the clouds. Not least of all, by the relics everywhere of a bygone age, dark ruins of innumerable pagodas, and far away to the south, the white patterns of the Ananda, the Gaw-daw-palin and the That-byin-nyu in a trinity of beauty. There is an exhilaration in the clear dry air which opens alike the mind and the eyes, widening the horizon, so that both seize with new power all that is contained within it.

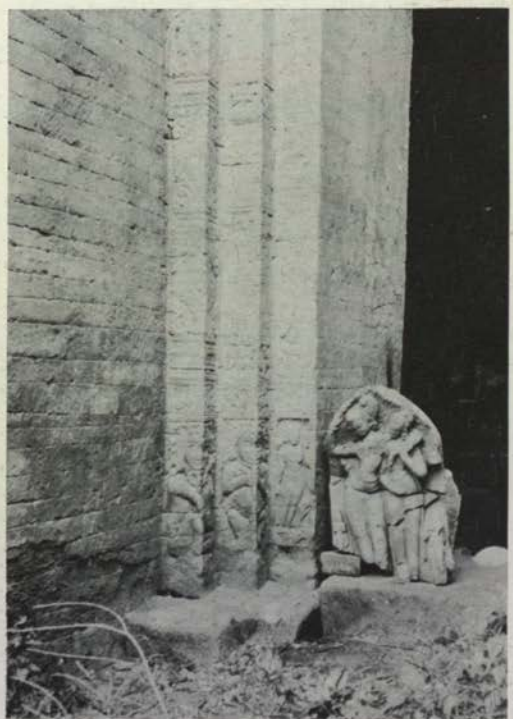
The Kyauk-ku temple climbs in three tiers from the sandy bottom of the ravine to its summit. The lowest tier is the oldest of all, and it greatly surpasses the other two in interest and beauty. It is made of stone, which is cut into rich scrolls and beautiful windows and a stately doorway. Carved figures in semi-relief lie about its threshold, some of them very tenderly and graciously executed. Within, a colossal Buddha of repulsive features shares its hospitality with pigeons whose swift flutterings startle the entering visitor, and innumerable bats whose excrement defiles the air and litters the sacred floor. Goats graze in its precincts, and shelter of nights within its gloomy interior. Yet upon many a day of the past it was the chosen place of a king's worship.

The stress of a thousand years has left its mark



THE KYAUK-KU-OHNMIN TEMPLE

upon the building. Centuries have passed since the men who made it withered into dust: for generations no man has inhabited it; yet the fancy of the architect, the delicate skill of the workmen, still make their eloquent appeal, and the eye, weary from gazing over vast spaces, sun-lit and sun-clad under the noon, rests gladly on its cool walls of mellow greenstone and on the rich harmony of its tracery. The marks of the masons' chisels, still fresh and clear, speed the imagination back to the days of their labour, before Anawrata was king, before the Norman had entered upon the soil of England, before Byzantium had fallen, hundreds of years before the Taj was built.



DOORWAY OF THE KYAUK-KU-OHNMIN

To thoroughly appreciate this temple and the part it has played in the history of Pagān, one must know one or two of the facts that have been gleaned about it.

There is the obvious one that it is made—the old part of it—of stone, whereas nearly every other building in Pagān, including its finest temples, is built of brick.

RUINS SHOWING PLASTER ORNAMENTATION 800 YEARS OLD

To suppose that the brick-builders of the Ananda, the Gaw-daw-palin, and the That-byin-nyu, those mighty architects, would come back to stone in this remoter corner of Pagān, when they had accomplished such great things in brick in the very heart of the city, would be to strain at probability. For this reason, if for no other, it seems certain that the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin is older than they. The only other buildings in old Pagān—two in number—that are of stone relate to the period of Anawrata and his captive, Manuha, King of Thatôn. And these are mingled with brick, a circumstance which would assign to the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin an antiquity greater than theirs.

It bears a striking resemblance to another edifice, perhaps the oldest Buddhist edifice in Burma—the temple of the Maha-Muni in Aracan, a shrine of the Buddhism of Northern India, whereas the Buddhism of Burma, as we know it to-day, is derived from the Southern school of Ceylon. The Kyauk-ku temple thus implies the existence in Pagān of a school of North-Indian Buddhism previous to the reign of Anawrata (1010 A.D.).[1]

[1] "Before the time of Anawrata, a corrupt form of Buddhism prevailed at Pagān. It appears to have been an admixture of Lamaism and Tantric Buddhism. Its professors were called the 'Ari' or 'Ariya,' the Noble. Their robes were dyed with indigo, like those of the Lamas of Thibet and China, and they wore their hair long. They were not strict observers of their vows of celibacy, and the basis of their doctrines was that sin could be expiated by the recitation of certain hymns. A close study of inscriptions and native histories reveals the fact that as the religion, letters, and civilisation of Upper Burma were influenced by Magadha, Nepal, Thibet, and China, so those of the Talaings of Lower Burma were affected by Ceylon, Southern India, and Cambodia, and these two streams of influence finally coalesced at Pagān in the eleventh century A.D., when the Burmese King Anawrata subverted the Talaing kingdom of Thatôn, and led its monarch, Manuha, captive to Pagān, together with the learned monks and literary treasures of the conquered race."—*Note by Mr. Taw-Sein-Ko.*

But these are subjects to which specialists alone can give their time. One may glance here for a moment at

NAN-PAYA : STONE CARVING ON EXTERIOR, MYIN-PAGĀN

the human interest of the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin temple, whose history has been illuminated in part by the researches of the learned Forchhammer. He says : "On

this desolate high plateau, intersected in all directions by deep gorges, lived the Burmese priests of the old school (Maramma Samgha) after they had been excommunicated by the zealous Talaing priest Chapada, who had returned from Ceylon, where he had received the Upasampada ordination from the priests of the Maha-Vihara. 'The Marammas' (Burmans), Chapada exclaimed, 'are indeed the lords of the country, and the Maramma priests have assumed lordship over the Church, but their ordination not having been performed in accordance with the precepts of the Vinaya, is not valid; it behoves not that we, the successors of Soma and Uttara, should hold communion with them.' Chapada and his followers then renounced community with the Pagān priests and formed a sect of their own in A.D 1182. Narapati Jayasura, King of Pagān, patronised this sect, and it attained to great influence and numerical strength at the capital. The high plateau, forming an arid, parched, and barren plain, where the Maramma Samgha lived, is admirably adapted for abstract studies. There is nothing to prevent the mind from concentrating itself on metaphysics. Here is the cradle of Pali-Burmese literature, and the many interesting treatises written by the industrious monks who dwelt here in the eleventh and twelfth centuries are in point of learning second to none in Buddhist literature."

Notwithstanding the preference attributed to King Narapati-sithu for the rival monks of Ceylon, it is with his name that the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin is intimately associated. The two upper stories were added by him, and in the neighbourhood there are other pagodas, in whose names there still lingers a record of his devotions at

THE SHWÉ-ZIGON PAGODA

this shrine. It was his wont to come, as a modern traveller can still come, by river to the mouth of the gorge which leads to the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin, and the point at which the royal barge was moored is marked by the Paungdaw-U Pagoda, now in a state of dissolution. He was accompanied on these occasions by his wife and her sister, but as the rules of monastic discipline forbade their entering the precincts of this place of meditation, the King built for them a resting-place on the hillside, whence they could gaze upon the sacred edifice while he went within. Upon this site two pagodas are built and named Kyi-daw-mu-paya, the Pagodas of the Royal Vista.

At a later date, when the existence of the capital was threatened by the Mongol invasion which destroyed Pagān, the King in despair endeavoured to fortify his city, and a relic of these belated works is believed to survive in the terraces which rise in succession from the base of the gorge to its summit on the western side of the Kyauk-ku temple. Often mentioned in the Chronicle of Pagān, the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin continued to serve as a refuge for fugitive priests, kings, and nobles long after the fall of the royal capital. But all mention of it ceases with the death of the renowned monk Ariyadhamma, who inhabited it till the year 1637 A.D. Since his death it has had no history.

Of the pagodas in its neighbourhood all are in ruins but one, built in the last days of Pagān before it ceased to be a capital. Its walls are painted with scrolls, festoons, and frescoes depicting episodes in the transmigration of the soul of Buddha, before it attained its

THE ANANDA

ultimate release. Farther south, where the Hnget-pyit-taung monastery stands, is a cluster of pagodas and of caves cut out of the soft sandstone. To this region the zealous Chapada, who claimed for the Ceylonese Church the only valid succession in Burma, retired after his rupture with the other fraternities. The entire neighbourhood has again and again been devoted to religious use, and the present monastery, whose spires, rising above the general desolation, greet the traveller's eye to-day, is but the latest of a long succession extending over seven hundred years. Some curious particulars of the past may still be culled from the stone inscriptions in the neighbourhood.

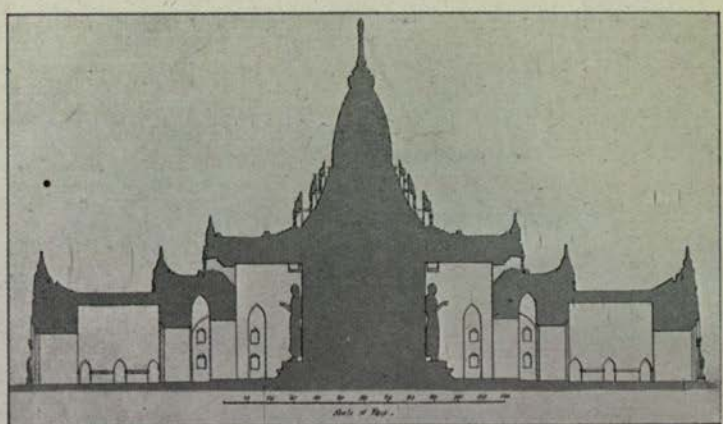
The earliest of these, dated in the year 1215 A.D. and in the reign of Zeyathinga, forty-ninth king of the dynasty of Pagān, records that the daughter of Nagayit, an officer in charge of the royal elephants, dedicated her personal slaves to the religion, saying "that she had no right of possession, over even her own offspring."

More than one inscription relates to the monk Winido, who appears to have been highly esteemed by the pious laity of his time. We learn that the headman Kyizin and his wife offered to the monk Winido a complete set of the Tripitaka with 20 *pés* of paddy-land. In 1228 a Minister of the King, named Letkana-letwe, having obtained from his master, as a reward for his success in war, two hundred *pés* of irrigated paddy-land, dedicated them to the Payagyi Pagoda in the presence of the monk Winido and his brethren.

On Friday the 4th day of the waning moon of Wazo, in the year 1245, two hundred *pés* of paddy-land

were dedicated to the same pagoda, when the monk Bok-dalinga, to whom the land had been previously offered by the King, renounced the world and chose the life of a strict ascetic in a cave.

In 1271 Pyinnya Thin dedicated to the same pagoda his two personal slaves in order that he and they might escape the horrors of avici (hell). The slaves willingly submitted to their dedication. And in the year 1796 of the Religion (1252 A.D.), in the reign of King



SECTION OF ANANDA TEMPLE, PAGĀN

Uzana of Pagān, the Minister Plenipotentiary Mahathaman, who was a very pious devotee of the three gems, and his wife, who was replete with virtue and wisdom and charity, erected a large monastery surrounded by a wall enclosing a beautiful garden containing young fruit trees, a tank, a beautiful covered walk, and a rest-house, on a piece of high land east of Pagān; and dedicated to it many slaves, cows, and buffaloes, paddy-lands, gardens, and plantations; and caused a large barn to be erected for the storage of grain.

Of the lands thus dedicated, some were purchased from the Brahman astrologers of the Court, to whom they had been given by the King; and others from O-Chat-Thin, a maid-of-honour.

KING KYANSITTHA, FOUNDER OF THE ANANDA TEMPLE, PAGĀN

Five hundred years later we come to an imperious fiat of the great Alompra, dated in the year of Plassey.

"We hereby command," it runs, "that the five letters *abhaya-dana* be added to the inscription on the Hnget-pyit-taung seal, and that the officials and other inhabitants of Pagān and Nyaungu shall, on pain of severe punishment, refrain from indulgence in intoxicating liquors and drugs, and from taking any animal life, or capturing any animal, within a radius of five hundred *tas* of our monastery at Hnget-pyit-taung. Given through Zeya-yanoung, Governor of Pagān, on Saturday, the 4th waning of Tabodwe, 1119 Sakkaraj."

As the evening gathers one turns back from these relics of the past to the modern rest-house on the hill, whence a spectacle of extraordinary splendour is unfolded. For the entire river, which spreads away with a width of ten miles to the distant western shore, is transformed by the setting sun into a lake of gold. In its forefront rise the dark carved sterns of a fleet of Burmese boats; beyond the river there is the barrier of the Tangyi hills in heavy shadow; and beyond them again the lofty summits of the Aracan mountains rise transfigured in waves of flame. The same spectacle

COLOSSUS OF THE BUDDHA IN THE ANANDA PAGODA; A WORSHIPPER AT FOOT

unfolded itself each season for twelve hundred years before the kings of Pagān!

From Nyaungu there is a white sandy track which runs the whole length of the desolate city, and one may follow it now for all that it has to show of the past. It brings one first to the outer causeway and the leogryphs which guard the approach to the Shwé-zigon Pagoda.

Here is a building distinct in its style of architecture, both from the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin and from nearly all of the celebrated shrines of Pagān. It is a solid *stupa* tapering to a point, and crowned with a golden *hti*, which is hung with bells that tinkle in every breeze. It has little claim to beauty or fine architecture, but it is deeply venerated, and more worshippers throng its courts to-day than are to be found at any other pagoda of Pagān. It owes its sanctity to the belief that it contains the frontal bone and a tooth of the founder of the Buddhist religion. Its site was chosen by setting a white elephant free, with "a wish" that he might indicate the place where the sacred relics should be enshrined. The elephant wandered to this spot, which was then but a sandbank, and stood by it with his precious burden until those who followed in his wake arrived.

"The graceful Shwé-zigon stands," in the words of a king of Ava, "within the firmament which is the highway of the winds. It was erected by the eminent Emperor Anawrata, who in consultation with the Thagyamin conveyed the sacred tooth relic from the Isle of Ceylon, and enshrined it within this sanctuary." It was

enlarged to its present dimensions by King Kyansittha in the latter part of the eleventh century, and the space between the old pagoda and its new casing was, according to popular belief, filled with jewels, thrown in as metal into a mould from which the wax had run out, by the King and all his Court. In 1767 A.D. the *hti* of Kyansittha having fallen, Sinbyu-shin, King of Ava, resolved to replace it, and it is from an inscription left by him that the following particulars are taken:

SILENCE

"As conspicuous as the lunar orb in a clear sky, there stands in Pagān the famous and wonderful Shwé-zigon Pagoda. It has for centuries withstood the rigours of the climate. In the year 2312 of the Religion the Emperor, in a happy moment, asked himself what he should do to add to his own merit and to please the people. No sooner had he done so, than the *hti* of the Shwé-zigon Pagoda, without being affected in the least by wind or weather, bodily detached itself from its rest and slowly glided down to the earth. The Emperor gladly availed himself of the opportunity, and offered his own valuable crown of refined gold, a quantity of gold plate, flowers,

and nuggets, gold-dust, silver, and precious stones towards the making of the *hti*, while the Queen-Dowager and other members of the royal family contributed a large quantity of jewellery. Moreover the Ministers applied for and obtained permission to contribute refined gold, nuggets, and silver bullion. The aggregate amount of gold used in its construction was 17,368 *viss*, and of silver 64,613 *viss*. The number of precious stones used was 2,109, including 1,045 emeralds, 818 rubies, 65 diamonds, 34 sapphires, 6 cat's-eyes and pearls. On the completion of the work the Emperor invited every member of his family, as well as the Ministers and Generals, to witness the ceremony of putting up the new *hti*, and in a golden barge adorned with three turreted canopies, accompanied by a large fleet of gaily equipped boats, proceeded down the river on Monday, the full moon of Mayon, 1130 Sakkaraj, and reached Nyaungu in four days. On the sixth waxing day of the same month, the day on which the usual yearly festival was held at the pagoda, the Emperor, attended by the Queen-Dowager, the Queen, his three younger brothers, the princes and princesses, performed the ceremony of offering the *hti* by pouring water out

FIGURE AT INNER DOOR OF ANANDA

THAT-PHIN-NYO

of a gold cup studded with rubies. The whole pagoda was then gilt and a large number of titled and other monks renowned for their learning and piety were invited, and were lavishly supplied with food and raiment."

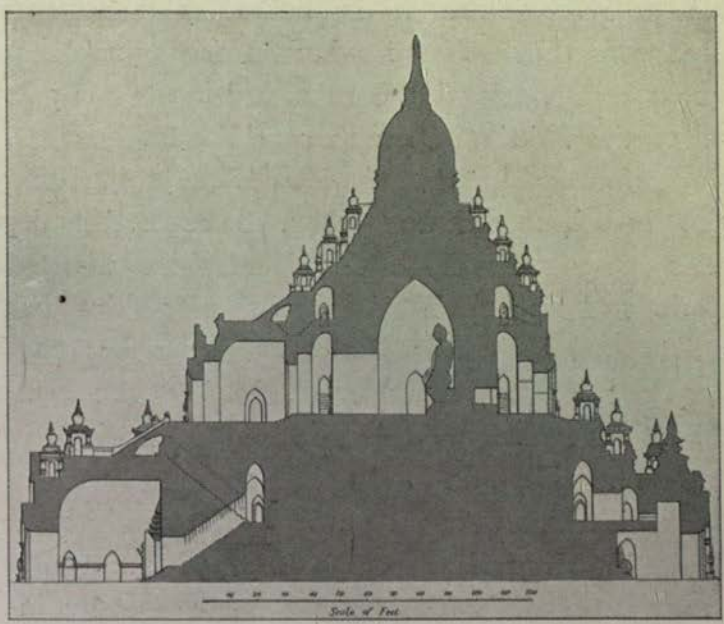
Few of those who visit the desolate city realise what a fortune is hung above their heads, at the summit of the Shwé-zigon!

A number of the inscriptions in the courtyard of the temple record the endowments of the pagoda. One of these, dated 1184 A.D., relates that when King Narapati-sithu, lord of thirty-nine white elephants and an army of 17,645 soldiers, the acknowledged Suzerain of all Chiefs, the Mighty and Powerful Ruler, made a progress up the river, the royal barge stopped of its own accord at Kokkan-paunglaung, and the King's helmet fell off. The King then demanded an interpretation of the omen, and Shwé-in-dauk informed him that lands should be dedicated to the pagoda of the locality. Fifty *pés* of land were accordingly dedicated by the King, the produce of which was to be utilised in providing, daily, rice-offerings and lights at the pagoda. The inscription concludes with a pious aspiration that any one who tampers with the King's gift may be "doomed to suffer as charred pillars in that hell which is assigned to confirmed and hopeless heretics."

Round the square base of the Shwé-zigon there are terra-cotta panels with bas-reliefs let into the brickwork, depicting scenes in the life of Buddha. Round about the courtyard there is a four-square wall, with turrets at the corners, on which there are seated figures of Nats. Here, and within the precincts of the pagoda, there are

many traces of the earlier religion which prevailed, before Buddhism was established in Pagān.

As one rides of a morning over the waste spaces of Pagān littered with the bricks of countless ruins, the sunlight still streams in at the ruined porches, bathing the lotus thrones and the superincumbent feet of



SECTION OF THAT-BYIN-NYU TEMPLE, PAGĀN

Buddhas in rising waves of gold. Nearly all look east, and the constant sunlight enters in now, with its homage, as it did a thousand years ago, careless of the changes that have been since then. In the lonely ways, flanked with cactus and heavy with a fine white sand, the detritus of centuries, carts creak slowly on their way, voices come up over the barren *despoblado*, and from time

to time as one nears the road his eyes are caught by the shimmer of silk and the passing face of a fair woman.

But the supreme note, as it always is at Pagān, is one of desolation and despair; of desolation in these vast spaces crowded with decaying spires and ruined walls, the dead bones of the past; of despair of all human progress, since it is liable to such sweeping cataclysms as this. The mat-hovels, the squalid hamlets, that now exist amongst the ruins are but a poor broken sequel to the old-time splendour of Pagān.

Reflections of this kind, inevitable here, bring one to the broad torrent-bed which flows under deserted pagodas past the village of Wet-kyi-in, where stone inscriptions dating from 1170 A.D. offer faint glimpses into the past. The earliest of these refers to Kala-kyaungs or Indian temples, confirming the fact that Pagān at that time was directly under the influence of India. The Tilo-min-lo Pagoda some way further on is a conspicuous landmark, east of the sandy road. It was built by King Zeyatheinga between the years 1204 and 1227 A.D. This king, whose name appears in more than one inscription relating to the dedication of lands and the building of monasteries and libraries, was surnamed Nan-daung-mya, or "The Frequent Supplicant," because he reached the throne in supersession of his elder brothers, only through the oft-repeated supplications of his mother, the wife of King Narapati-sithu.

On the west of the Tilo-min-lo and across the road, there is a brick Thein or Hall of Ordination for Priests, decorated with frescoes of kings on elephants, followed

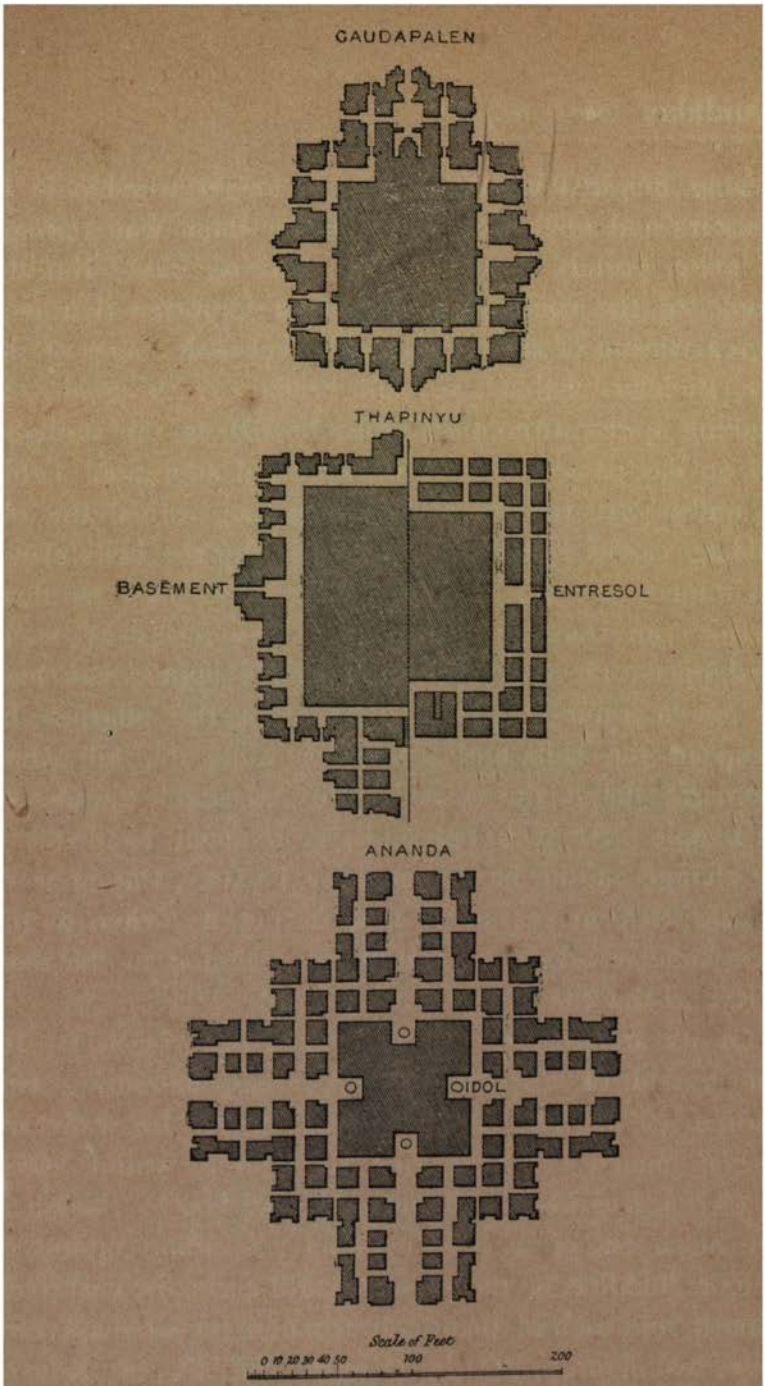
by ministers and attendants bearing white umbrellas aloft. In the panels overhead there are single figures of Nats or Dewas in embroidered robes that suggest lace. All are carried out in a manner that is greatly superior to more modern work of the same kind.

BIRTH OF GAUTAMA, ANANDA PAGODA

And now, leaving lesser things alone, we may well turn up the pathway which leads to the Ananda Pagoda, the first of the great temples of Pagān. Built in the reign of King Kyansittha, the Ananda as a building has suffered little from the passage

of nine hundred years. Kings no longer worship in it, ministers and nobles no longer make their way through its great portals from the neighbouring city. But the people of the countryside have not forgotten that it is a great shrine of their faith. The colossal images of the four Buddhas within are still brilliant with gold; its climbing spires without still gleam white in the sunlight, and no day passes without worship and adoration within its walls. At the season of its annual festival the old building moves again with life. All day the bells clang, and tapers are lit, and one who peers into its dusk interior can trace in faint outline the forms of many worshippers, the flicker of innumerable lights; can hear the low murmur of prayer. At night the pilgrims lie asleep in the halls and vestibules, while the full white moonlight floods the cusped spire and stately façades of the temple. At such times one is tempted to doubt if any change at all has come over Pagān. But in truth the life that moves in it now is but a flicker to the great flame of adoration that burnt within it in the days of Kyansittha the King.

Of its architecture this only need here be said. Its plan is that of a perfect Greek cross, measuring two hundred and eighty feet across each way. Its walls are of such immense solidity that the temple within looks, not as if it had been built up of brick, but as though it were hewn out of a solid pyramid. Standing figures of the four Buddhas of the present world-cycle are enshrined within it, and each of them is lit from an invisible aperture above, as figures of the Virgin are lit in Roman Catholic churches in Europe. In niches left in the walls



From a drawing by CAPT. YULE after measurements by himself and friends
From YULE's *Embassy to the Court of Ava*, 1858

GROUND PLANS OF THREE TEMPLES AT PAGĀN

of its corridors there are images of Buddha and sculptured groups depicting incidents in his life. Of such images and groups there are several thousand, many of them admirably executed, within and without the temple. The square mass of the building is surmounted by six successively diminishing terraces, the last of which forms a base for the square mitre-like spire, which itself upholds like a jewel in its cusps the typical pinnacle of the Burmese pagoda. There is an exquisite harmony of design in this building, combined with enormous solidity and fine workmanship which seem destined to preserve it for many centuries to come.[1]

A short way beyond it, and approached by a pathway which runs through a gap in the eastern wall of the fortified city, stand the That-byin-nyu and Gaw-daw-palin pagodas, which share with it the glory of being the finest structures in Pagān. The That-byin-nyu, rising to a height of two hundred feet, is loftier than any other building in the city. Its most striking feature is presented by its third terrace, which leaps up unexpectedly to a height of fifty feet, unlike the Ananda, whose terraces climb in regular succession to its summit. Within these walls of fifty feet, the great image of the temple is enshrined some seventy feet above the level of the ground.

[1] "The Ananda Pagoda possesses two features which make it perhaps the most interesting building in Burma. The first of these is a long series of stone sculptures set up in the interior aisles, which are said to be contemporary with the building, and which represent various scenes in the life of the Buddha. The other is the ornamental tile-work consisting of some one thousand five hundred separate plaques disposed on bands around the exterior walls of the four terraces. On each plaque is some scene connected with Buddhist ceremonial, or representing one of the Jataka stories, and this fact renders them of peculiar value."—J. H. MARSHALL.

The Gaw-daw-palin stands architecturally midway between its two fellows. The Ananda, more exquisite in detail than either of its companions, lacks something of the majesty of the That-byin-nyu. In the Gaw-daw-palin stateliness and harmony of proportion are combined.

Seen from a little distance, these great pagodas present

THE DEATH OF MAYA, ANANDA PAGODA

an appearance of extraordinary beauty. Transfigured in the soft light of a Burmese evening against a curtain of electric clouds, they look as if for sheer perfection of form and outline they could not be surpassed; and it is impossible to resist their absolute fascination. It is in detail and in their interiors that they somewhat fail. Within them there is created a sense of enormous weight that is

stifling and oppressive; and beautiful as much of the tracery is, animated as are many of the tiles, superior as is the masonry to that of the modern workman, there is little in any of their details to be mentioned in the same breath with the fine work of Greek or Italian or Norman buildings.

One does well to linger over these temples, for in their architecture they represent the utmost limit that has been attained in Burma. In 800 years there has been nothing done to surpass them. The problem as to how they came to be built at all is one of some fascination. The explanation in both cases seems to be that the impulse under which they were created was an exotic one, absorbed for the time being by the people, given a fresh vigour in their hands at a time of national exaltation; but in essence, extraneous and short-lived. It

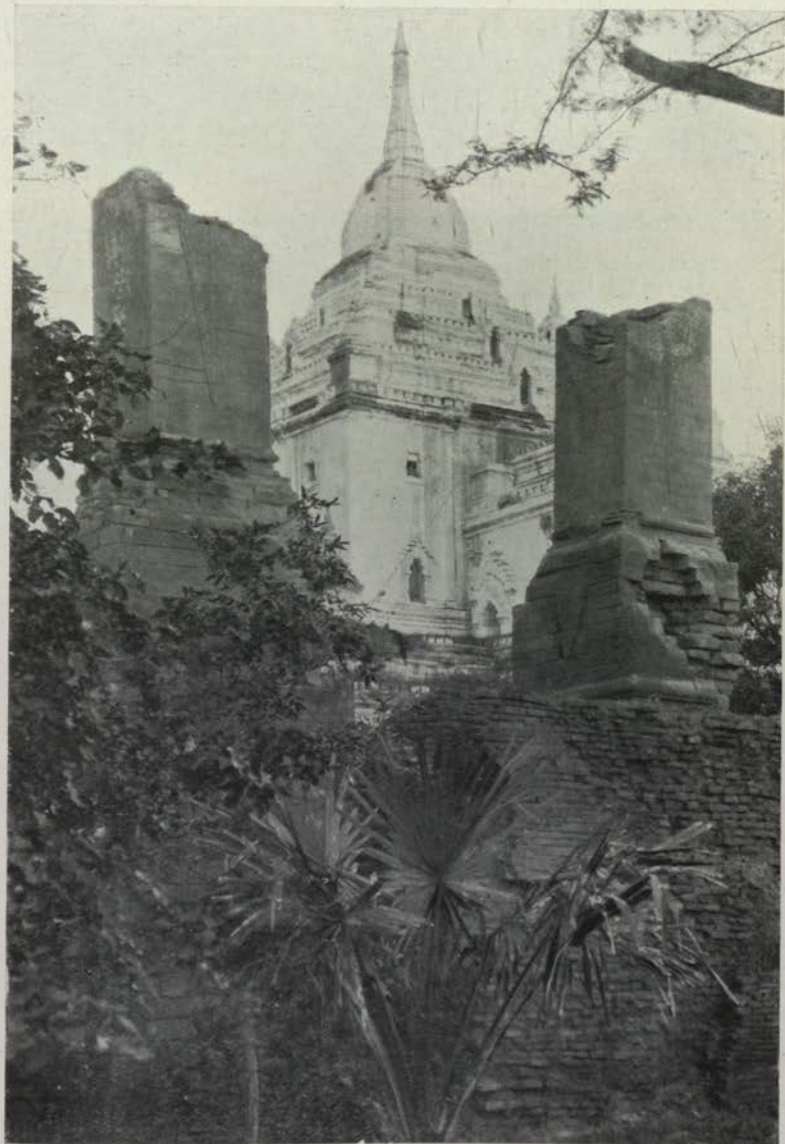
GAUTAMA'S RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD, ANANDA PAGODA

may be also that the temples of Pagān, which in one sense are the glory of Burma, are in another an exhibition of her shame, since they display the inherent limits of the race, and seem to point to the lack of that quality of persistence in a people which can alone lift them to any great place in the world.

It is customary to attribute the architecture of Pagān to Indian workmen, and there is no question that Indian workmen were employed. Innumerable similarities in detail between the architecture of Pagān and Hindu architecture in India make this certain. But there are no edifices of the same period in India which reach the sublimity of the Pagān temples, and the arch which is the most conspicuous feature of Pagān construction, was, as experts have pointed out, unknown in Hindu India. To what source then, are we to attribute the magnificent conception of these buildings, and the masterly and finished use of the arch in their construction? The question still awaits an answer.

Of the buildings within the circuit of the city walls, there are several besides the That-byin-nyu and Gaw-daw-palin which are worthy of notice.

First of all, a few yards to the north of the That-byin-nyu is the Bidagat-taik, or Library, in which, according to local tradition, the Scriptures carried away from Thatôn by Anawrata were lodged. Its dark interior, scarcely fitted at any time, one would think, for the reception of books that were meant to be read, is now pitted with hoof-marks, overgrown with grass, and redolent of offal. Near it is the Shwé-gu-gyi Pagoda, an elegant building, but dwarfed by its mighty neighbour



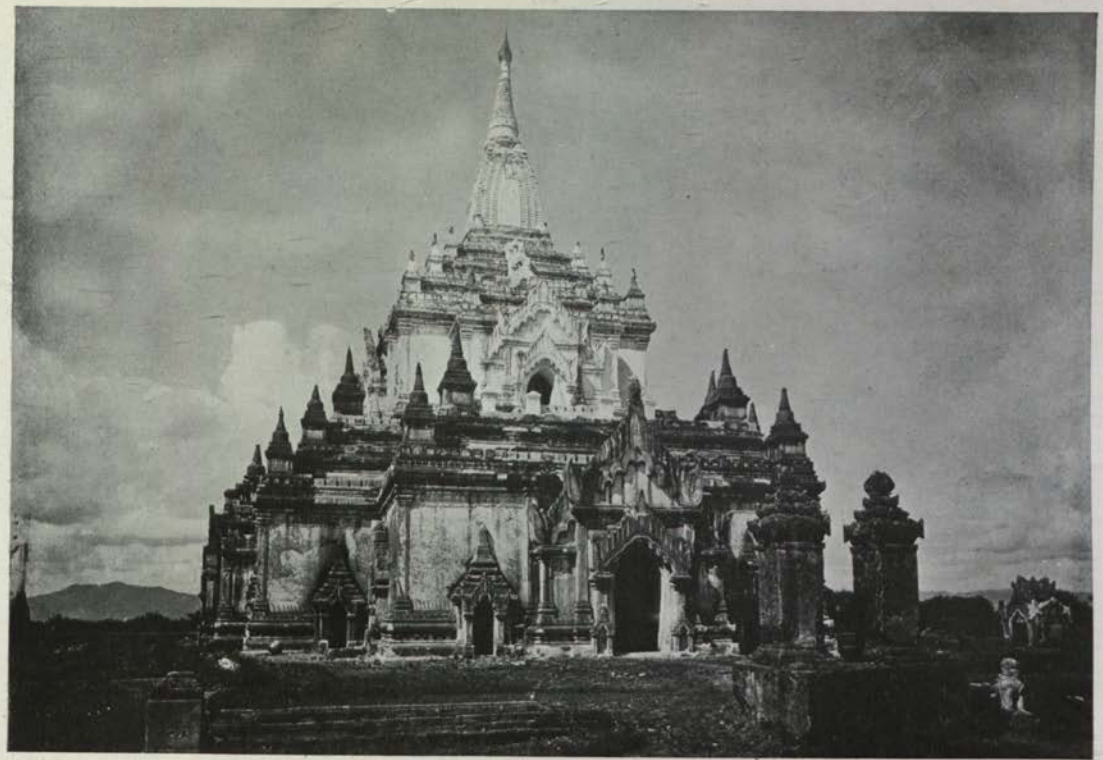
PILLARS OF THE BIG DRUM

the That-byin-nyu. It was built by King Alaung-sithu in the year 1142 A.D. A stone inscription, which is famous in Burma for the elegance of its style, records its origin in the following terms:

"The wise, righteous, and justly famous King Alaung-sithu, who is able to disperse his own enemies and those of his people and religion as the glorious and rising sun disperses darkness, fear, and cold, has been ruling Pagān in accordance with the ten kingly precepts. Knowing that in the three worlds it is exceedingly difficult to become a Buddha or a man, and have the opportunity of hearing the law of the righteous preached, the wise King Alaung-sithu had this beautiful and lofty pagoda built and adorned with several small pagodas and statues of Nats in honour of the excellent and virtuous Buddha Gautama. Being desirous of saving the three Superior Beings from the miseries of Samsaro, the King further had a wonderfully beautiful and pleasing image made, which exactly resembled the living Buddha, the adorable, the wise, and the possessor of the five kinds of clear-visioned eyes. After the completion of this pagoda and image, His Majesty caused a complete copy of the Tripitaka to be prepared, and during the dedication ceremonies offered suits of robes to several monks, and cheerfully ministered to their other material wants with his own hands."

It was near this pagoda that the aged king, who reigned seventy-five years, was stifled to death in a heap of old clothes by his son Narathu.

West of the That-byin-nyu is a small ruined building described by the people as a Nat-house, but really a



GAW-DAW-PALIN PAGODA

Hindu temple. It has been rifled of most of its statues, but there is still within a figure of Siva, with four arms holding a trident, a hammer, a short sword, and a bludgeon. On the outside are figures of the avatars of Vishnu. The temple, it is conjectured, was built for the use of the Hindu stonemasons employed in the building of the great pagodas, and the conjecture is borne out by an inscription in Tamil characters of the thirteenth century which indicate that Pagān was resorted to at that time by Vaishnava Hindus from various parts of the Indian Peninsula.

THE BIDAGAT-TAIK

Of the palace of the kings of Pagān no trace survives. But the traditions of the people point to the croton-covered soil east of the Shwé-gu-gyi Pagoda as its site.

Two pagodas within the walls of the fortified city remain to be mentioned. One of these, the Bawdi, is meant to be a duplicate of the temple at Buddha Gaya in India. It lacks the finish and workmanship of the original, and it is architecturally only of importance since it indicates the continued intimacy of Pagān with India, and the decline in its own great standard of building. But it is much esteemed by the people, and in the mild golden light of evening its white mass makes a strong appeal to the eye. Then one can see its pointed

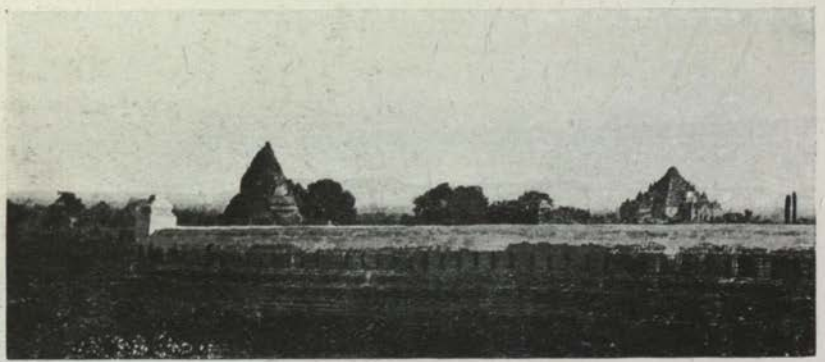
spire held aloft like a cusped jewel, while the light strikes clear between the enfolding claws.

A little beyond it, rising from a series of trefoil terraces from the edge of the river, stands the Bu or

SHWÉ-GU-GYI PAGODA

Pumpkin Pagoda, a strange-looking edifice which suggested to Sir Henry Yule the architecture of another planet. Its age is uncertain, but the people of the countryside attribute it to the first days of Pagān, seventeen hundred years ago.

Here we may take leave of the fortified city; yet before doing so one cannot fail to notice how small an area it occupied, by comparison with that of the entire city whose ruins line the banks of the river for eight miles. Of the secular past, these walls and gateways are almost the only surviving relic. Near the That-byin-nyu there are two cut-stone columns of gigantic proportions from which of old the big drum of the Palace was hung. They are made of red sandstone, cut in beautifully



VIEW FROM SHWÉ-GU-GYI PAGODA

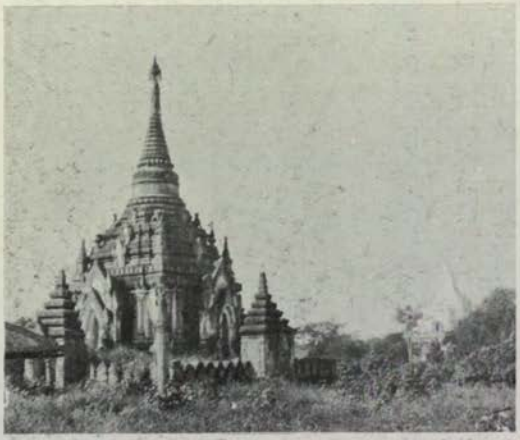
jointed blocks, and traces still survive of the elaborate tracery with which they were formerly engraved. The age of the city walls presents a curious problem. For since the Palace must have stood within them and the area enclosed within them is not large, it seems strange that so much of this space should have been allotted to such immense buildings as the That-byin-nyu and the Gaw-daw-palin. Had the walls of the city been in existence before these edifices were built, it might have been expected that, like the Ananda, they would have been built outside them.

Leaving the city by what must once have been the eastern gate, a narrow sandy lane, passing between high hedges of cactus overgrown with creepers, runs on to the Dhammayangyi Pagoda, the biggest building at Pagān, built by the parricide king, Narathu. He was murdered in the fourth year of his reign, and it is improbable that this gigantic building, the largest in Pagān, was ever finished. It consists of a square central block apparently but not really solid, round which there runs a corridor. Four great porches open from this corridor on the points of the compass. Three enshrine figures of the Buddha; the fourth is empty, the figure being within the wall of the inner square. Lateral windows, cut in the immense depth of the walls, send light down the corridors. There are huge archways in the central block on its four sides, of which three were bricked up, according to local

THE HINDU GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF THE STONEMASONS

tradition, by an alchemist. Grass now grows on all the terraces outside, and the original outline has sunk to a mere pyramid of brick. It is interesting to remember that it was built before the Gaw-daw-palin.

A lane from here connects the Dhammayangyi through fields of millet with the Sulamani Pagoda, another of the ruined giants of Pagān. A monastery still shelters under its lofty courtyard wall. There is a tank here, and a painted acacia of patriarchal age, whose great boughs, propped up by wooden pillars, cover a wide area with their dappled shade. The pagoda retains, in spite of time and decay, its graceful form. It is richly frescoed within from floor to ceiling, its brickwork is finished to perfection, and its plaster shows traces of fine handiwork. Stairs like those of a lectern in a monkish refectory climb up within the corridors and lead through the south wall to the first floor, whence there is an ascent from the outside to the floor above. It is worth while climbing up for the view of the dead city which awaits one here, under the great arches.



THE PASIT-OK-KU

The front of Popa looms blue above the Tabayin hills; the That-byin-nyu, the Ananda, and the Gaw-daw-

palin lift their white forms against the blue hills beyond the river, and the peg-top spire of the Shwé-zigon cuts the sky with its outline of gold above the cliffs and hamlets of Nyaungu. All that the eye rests on between these supreme eminences is compact of countless pagodas in every stage of dissolution, down to mere swelling grass-covered tumuli, like little waves of land, under which some bygone edifice lies buried. Hedges of thorny cactus, fields of millet, acres of purple croton, fill up all the intervening spaces. What a spectacle it must have been when the city was in its prime!

THE BAWDI

Returning hence to the city walls, one leaves them, through the southern gate, for the Mingala-zedi Pagoda, which stands between the sandy pathway and the lustrous river beyond. It was built by Nara-thi-ha-pati, fifty-second King of Pagān, known to infamy as "He who fled from the Chinese." One of the last of the greater buildings of Pagān, it is in the style of the typical Burmese pagoda. Its walls are built of bricks, on which lines of Pali verses setting forth the history of the pagoda are inscribed. Its base is lavishly decorated with enamelled tiles, and an inscription

within the courtyard records its foundation in the following words:

"On Sunday the 6th waxing of Tabaung, 63rd Sakkaraj, King Nara-thi-ha-pati, who is the supreme commander

THE BU OR PUMPKIN PAGODA

of the vast army of thirty-six million soldiers, and who is the consumer of three hundred dishes of curry daily, being desirous of attaining the bliss of Nirvana, erected a pagoda. Having done so, the King enshrined within it fifty-one gold and silver statuettes of kings, queens,

noblemen and maids-of-honour, and over these an image of Gautama Buddha in solid silver one cubit high, on Thursday the full-moon of Kason, 636 Sakkaraj. On that occasion a covered way was erected from the palace to the pagoda. Bamboo mats were laid along this. Over these rush mats were spread, and over these again, pieces of cloth twenty cubits each in length were spread; and at each cubit's length of the way banners were placed. During the ceremony the princes, princesses, and nobles threw a large number of pearls among the statuettes, and the pagoda was formally named the Mingala-zedi."

APPROACH THROUGH FIELDS OF MILLET TO THE SULAMANI PAGODA

The road continues on past the Ku-byauk-gyi, built by King Kyansittha, and noticeable for its fine plaster and its windows of cut stone. Near it is the Myazedi, in whose courtyard there is a pillar inscribed on its four faces with a legend in Burmese, Pali, Môn and an unknown alphabet and tongue. The Pali and Burmese inscriptions are to the same effect, and record that in the year 1628 of the Religion (1084 A.D.) King Kyan-

sittha granted three villages of slaves to his wife, Queen Thanbula. When the Queen died the King handed over her jewellery and the three slave villages to his son the Prince Rajakumara. After a reign of twenty-eight years the King died, and in memory of his royal parents the Prince had a golden image made from his

THE MONASTERY COURT

mother's jewellery, and dedicated thereto the three slave villages granted him by his father. Having done this he placed the image in a cave.

On from here, over the white sands of the Myinkaba stream, under the shelter of great tamarinds of Anawrata's day, and past the Myinkaba Pagoda built by him to expiate his murder of a brother, one continues one's

journey through Myin-Pagān to the pagoda built by Manuha, the captive King of Thatôn. Outside it, a great alms-bowl ten feet high glitters in the sun; within, four colossal images of Buddha are enshrined. Three of these, which are seated, face the east, and the tallest of them is over fifty feet in height. The fourth, a recumbent figure of the dying Buddha, occupies the

PAGĀN

whole length of the building on the west. The features are aquiline, the nostrils slender and finely cut. The length of the image is ninety feet. This temple, one of the ugliest of its period, is held of special sanctity, and to this day all who pass by it stay a moment to worship in its gloom before the great colossi. A few yards to the south of it stand the remains of the palace of the captive king, one of the most remarkable

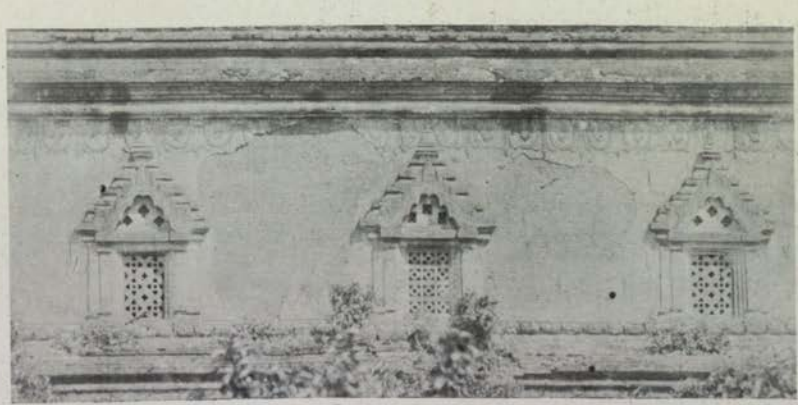
THE SULAMANI, SEEN THROUGH A RUINED ARCH OF THE OUTER COURT

buildings in Pagān. It is largely constructed of greenstone, of the same description as that of which the oldest portion of the Kyauk-ku-Ohnmin is built. Its inner walls, of immense thickness, are carved with images of Brahma, the Creator. The tracery within is of the richest description; the exterior surface of this building, whether palace or temple, is ornamented with a band of scroll design enclosing the sacred Hansa, and the windows are of perforated stone.[1]

The Nagā Yôn temple, farther south, is a graceful structure of the time of King Kyansittha. It is said to be the model of the Ananda. Within it there is a

[1] "There is one ornamental feature of this building which deserves particular notice, viz. the floral designs accompanying the figures of Brahma sculptured in relief on the stone pillars of the interior. Their interest lies in the fact that we appear to have here the prototypes from which the somewhat more conventional patterns in the Mughal architecture of India were copied, and if I am correct in this surmise, it disposes of the theory that the latter owed their origin to Italian inspiration."—J. H. MARSHALL.

standing image of Buddhà, sheltered overhead by a hooded snake Mucalinda, with a number of smaller snakes about it. The neighbouring village of Thiri-pyitsaya, sheltered by a great acacia and surrounded by a gigantic cactus-hedge, marks the site of one of the older capitals, "The City of Power and Glory," which preceded Pagān. The Law-ka-nanda, the Ku-byauk-gyi, the Tha-ya-wa-de, and the Sit-ta-na Pagodas are the southernmost of all in Pagān. Beyond them there is



STONE WINDOWS IN THE KU-BYAUK-GYI

naught but the barren upland as it existed before Pagan became a human habitation. Of these last pagodas, the Law-ka-nanda, built by King Anawrata, is the most conspicuous. It occupies a commanding site on the lofty cliff-point overlooking the river, and its white mass and golden *hte* are the first objects which appeal to the eye of the traveller coming up from the south. It has long fulfilled this purpose, for one reads how beneath it there anchored, in the great days of Pagān, the ships of Aracan and Ceylon

on their approach to the royal city. The neighbourhood of the Ku-byauk-gyi is desolate and lonely to the last degree.

III. THE PAGODA SLAVE

"Let Salinguerra seethe
In Hell for ever, Christ, and let myself
Be there to laugh at him!"

In the midst of the ruins of the ancient city there dwell in villages and hamlets a humble people whose main occupation is the manufacture of lacquer-ware. The occupation is hereditary, and every one, from the wife of the village headman to the nine-year-old child of a day labourer, pursues it. The foreshore of the river at Nyaungu, where the Flotilla steamers stop, is crowded through the year with the produce of their toil, and there is scarcely a village in the whole of Burma in which there is no sample of the Pagān ware. A monopoly so wide-reaching as this can only be due to one cause, and it is certain that the lacquer manufacturers of the ruined city have attained a very high degree of excellence in their work.

The basis of it is of delicate bamboo wickerwork, and a constant sight along the narrow sandy road that runs from Nyaungu to Pagān is that of some traveller with a swaying pole upon his shoulders, from which at each end there is suspended a pile of several hundred of the new glistening wicker boxes on their way to be lacquered in Pagān. Passing through numerous stages of treatment, the wicker at last presents a smooth black

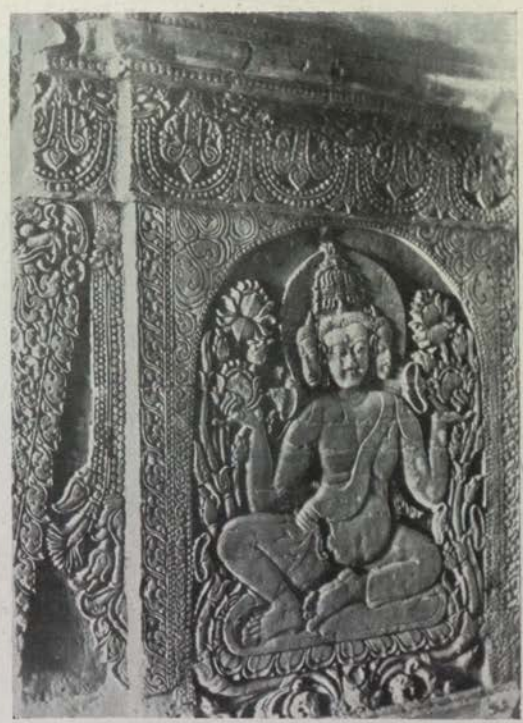
STONE WINDOW, NAN-PAYA TEMPLE

surface, upon which, with extreme rapidity and a certain execution bred by generations of training, the workers cut the desired pattern with a style. Colours, red, yellow, and green, are then successively applied, until the requisite effect is obtained. The surface is then polished till it glistens in the sun, and the finished

THE TEMPLE OF MANUHA, KING OF THATÔN

article is as flexible as thin steel. Large bowls, betel boxes, and trays are of more solid construction. All, when well made, are practically indestructible, Perfection turns on the amount of time and care lavished on each of the many stages through which the simplest object must pass, but much of the work now done is of an inferior order. Even in Pagān, time is coming to be held of some account.

Interesting as is this occupation of the people, there is one other circumstance connected with modern Pagān which makes it remarkable. For Pagān, once the capital of an empire, is now the high capital of the pagoda slave. The great majority of its people are slaves, the descendants of slaves, bound in perpetuity to the service of its countless shrines. At their head is the Mintha, their Prince, the lineal descendant of Manuha, King of Thatôn. Of the race of Anawrata the Great there is no living representative in Burma: the dynasty, the blood, have long since been extinguished; but of the blood of his captive there is still an acknowledged representative; he is still a prince, and still, after the lapse of nine centuries, a slave. Where shall one find anywhere a more striking illustration of the conservatism, of the resignation of the East? In all other matters the Burman has absorbed into his blood the Buddhist philosophy of equality and toleration. No caste distinctions bind him down, nor sour the social air he



TRIMURTI IN THE PALACE OF MANUHA

breathes. But in this one respect he is exclusive to the last degree. For the pagoda slave there is no room in the social life of Burma. Hospitable to the humblest passing stranger, the Burman will not tolerate for one instant the thought of breaking bread with the Payagyun. Catholic in her sentiments, there is one person on earth that a Burmese woman will not marry—the pagoda slave. And although in Pagān the Mintha is a man of consequence, a revenue official of the Government, the owner of lands and houses, the acknowledged descendant of a king, no Burman, however poor and humble, would willingly drink of the same cup with him, or break bread within the shadow of his house.

He is an old and dignified man this, with a slightly imperious air, who comes to meet us riding on a pony, an umbrella held over his head by an attendant. A silk fillet is tied about his brows, his silken skirt shimmers in the sun. He is not in any way distinguishable from his neighbours, except that he looks more emphatically a gentleman.

It is true, he says, that he is a descendant of Manuha, King of Thatôn. He had a pedigree traced on a *parabaik* showing clearly the stages of his descent; but it was stolen from him by a mad cousin. A copy of it was filed in the King's archives at Mandalay. He has a letter of appointment confirming his rights and privileges, given to him by Mindon Min. He is allowed gilt windows to his house, and is entitled to have a white umbrella, the insignia of royalty, carried over him at his death. When there was a king at Mandalay it was his custom to go annually to Court

to pay his respects. His father, he explains, killed his uncle. He was not punished. Why not? Because such is the way of kings. One cannot have more than one king at a time. But he himself has not killed any of his relations. He does not like taking life; and early in his youth he took an oath before a Pongyi that he would never shed another man's blood. King Mindon was of the same mind.

BUDDHA IN THE NĀGA YÔN (COBRAS ABOVE HIS HEAD)

Talking of Pagān and its past, he confirms the story that the palace of Manuha, at which we have arrived, was built by his ancestor. Men, he observes reflectively, do not now build pagodas as they did in the great days, because there are no longer any Indian architects. Anawrata first employed them at the instance of Manuha, King of Thatôn.

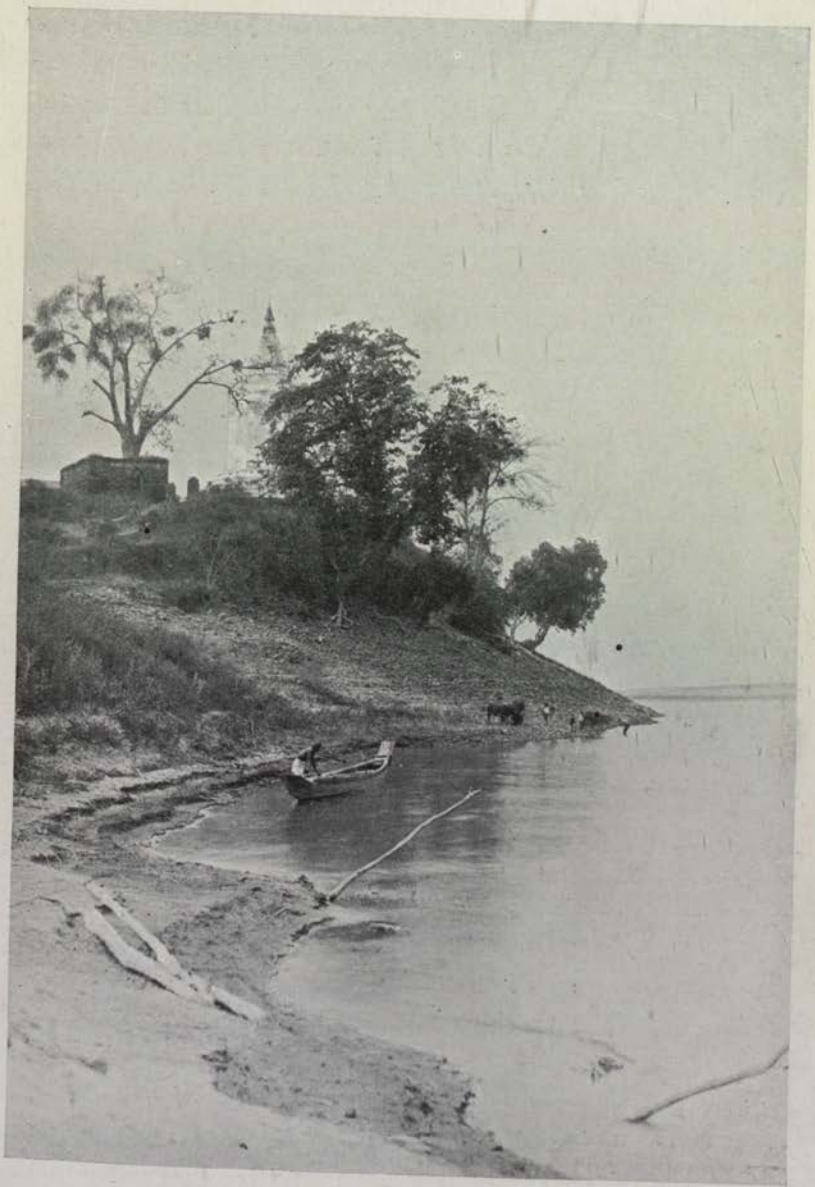
It is a curious history, and the presence of this old man, here amidst the ruins of the past, makes the intervening years shrink away to nothing.

Of the origin of pagoda slavery there is no authentic account. That it was, as an institution, in full vigour at Pagān 800 years ago is beyond doubt, and many curious particulars of it may be gleaned from the inscriptions of the city. It was common enough to dedicate individual slaves to the perpetual use of sacred buildings,

but there are also many instances in which whole villages were dedicated. Thus in an inscription of the year 1190 A.D., it is recorded that "the whole of the villages of Pondaw were dedicated." In another dated 1223 A.D., the daughter of Kyan Thaung records that "Having no father or heir to inherit my estate, I dedicate on this the 11th waning Pyatho, 585 Sakkaraj, Monday, the whole of the villagers of Nga Myindaung, for the upkeep of the recumbent image on the eastern side of my cave and of the image erected by monk Pwa-gyi."

That slaves who were not yet pagoda slaves could be bought for dedication to a pagoda is evident from more than one inscription. In one of these, dated 1221 A.D., it is recorded that the headman Kyizin and his wife bought Tauk-nwe-thi, daughter of Eiñ Thi, as a slave for dedication to the monastery of the monk Winido; and in another dated 1170 A.D., a certain Yattapisi and his wife take credit to themselves for dedicating as slaves eighteen persons "bought with the produce of our own labour and not inherited from our parents."

From an inscription dated 1271 A.D., it is clear that some portion of the merit of dedication was believed to attach to the slaves who were dedicated. "On Thursday, the 5th waning of Thadingyut, 633 Sakkaraj, Nga Pyinnya Thin dedicated his personal slaves Nga Ya Kaing and Nga Thaung Ga in order that he and they might escape the horrors of *avici* hell. The slaves willingly submitted to this dedication while they were resting their heads on Nga Pyinnyas' loins at a place called Ngataba."



THE LAW-KA-NANDA

GOLDEN IMAGE AT THE SHWÉ-ZIGON

The most remarkable case of all is that of Abi Naundathu, a courtier of the reign of Narapatisithu, who, after regilding the Taing-gyut Pagoda, offered himself, his wife, and two sons as slaves to the pagoda.

The social taint which clings to the pagoda slave is commonly attributed to the fact that he was originally a captive taken in war, or a malefactor reduced to such bondage as an alternative to death. But this explanation is inadequate. And in the circumstances it seems strange that the pagoda slave should labour under a disability that was never

THE PRINCE OF PAGĀN

shared by the secular slave. This is perhaps due to the fact that the disability of the secular slave was a temporary one, that could at any time be overcome by the payment of a sum of money; whereas the slave dedicated to religious use was dedicated for ever, he and all his descendants. The pagoda slave suffers also from the fact of his daily contact with the lepers and other diseased persons who frequent the pagodas of the country to beg a sustenance; and there is some underlying superstition as to the connection of leprosy with pagoda slavery. In Lower Burma there is a man of considerable prominence and ability who is known to be a pagoda slave by origin, and I have heard it whispered that once a year he goes secretly to the pagoda to eat of the offerings there, lest he should become a leper. Although he is a rich and an enlightened man, no Burman, who is not a slave, will have any social intercourse with him. The ban is absolute, and many strange instances of its working, full of human interest, constantly come to light.

Some little while ago, an Englishman who had married a girl of pagoda-slave origin sent his wife's young brother to school. But no sooner was it known who he was than all his schoolfellows refused to sit with him, and their parents protested to such a point that the lad had to be sent away from the school. More than once serious difficulties have arisen when the Government has appointed a man with slave blood in him to an official place. Tolerant in nearly every other relation of life the Burman is inflexible on this one point; for the pagoda slave there is no place but one of dishonour in Burma.

WAYSIDE RESTING-PLACE IN OLD PAGĀN

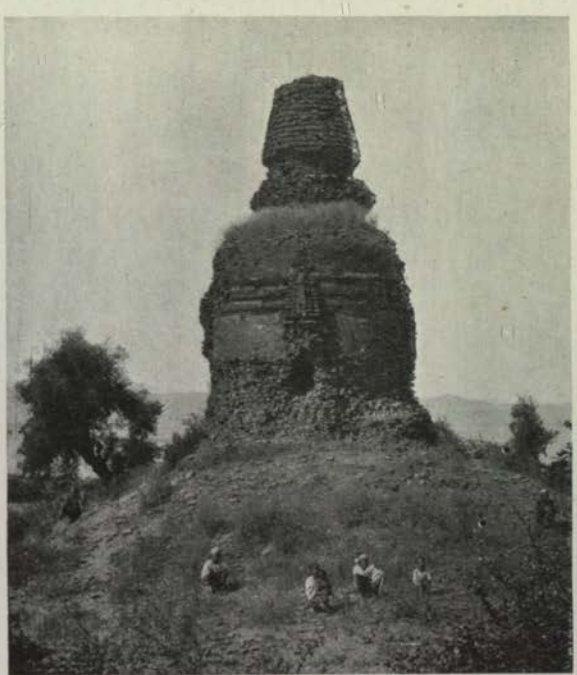
Yet this dishonour is not incompatible with wealth, and many of the endowments in land of the pagodas of Pagān were made for the sustenance of the slaves.

From an inscription of King Bo-daw-paya, dated 1785 A.D., it is apparent that the slaves had rights in such lands, which they were prepared to dispute. "Several disputes," runs the inscription, "arose formerly in respect of the right to utilise the produce of the land. In the reign of the founder of Sagaing, the Governor of Pagān sued for the recovery of the land from the pagoda slaves on the ground that the Zeya-kon Pagoda was not the Shwé-zigon. The case was decided by water-ordeal on the 14th waning of Taw-thalin, 1124 Sakkaraj, and the Governor lost the suit. Again, in the reign of Sin-byu-shin, founder of Ava, a similar dispute arose between the Governor of Pagān and the Thugyi of Nyaungu on the one side, and the pagoda slaves on the other. The King referred the matter to the Abbot of the Bonzantulut Monastery for decision; and the Abbot, after having examined the records relating to the land, decided the dispute in favour of the pagoda slaves on the 13th waning of Kason, 1134 Sakkaraj. Accordingly His Majesty, the founder of Amarapura, hereby confirms the above decision and re-dedicates the land, which is 4,900 cubits square, by pouring water out of a golden kettle, in order that the pagoda slaves might continue to utilise the produce of the land in making the daily offerings of rice and lights, and in maintaining the pagoda in repair."

The enormous conservatism of the people in regard

to pagoda slaves will be better understood on a perusal of some of the terrific anathemas launched, through the stone inscriptions of Pagān, against all who may dare to tamper with the perpetual nature of the endowments of slaves and lands.

"May those," asks a gentle and pious lady, the



RUINED PAGODA

wife of Kinkathu, a noble of Pagān, "who molest these slaves, whether king or subject, monk or layman, man or woman, live short and inglorious lives as human beings, and die an unnatural death caused by fire, water, lightning, axe, elephant, horse, donkey, leopard, orang-outang, or by some incurable disease while spitting clots of blood. May they after death be burnt in the great *avici* hell

CARVED PANEL IN A MONASTERY

and may they have no opportunity of beholding any of the future Buddhas. If perchance they are re-born as human beings, may they be leprous, lame, blind, deaf, dumb, or otherwise deformed or rendered infirm in consequence of their evil deed, and may they also suffer as *petas* beneath this earth."

"May all those," says King Nandaung-mya, the Frequent Supplicant, "who appropriate or destroy my offering, suffer like the man who was punished by being immersed waist-deep in a slab of rock sixty days' journey square, and upon whom the saving influence of three successive Buddhas has been exerted in vain."

CARVED PANEL IN A MONASTERY

SUNSET FROM THE PO-U-DAUNG

BOOK III

Prome—The Middle Country

Prome—
Thare-kettaya—
Po-u-daung

CHAPTER I

PROME

A Royal Page

PROME, in the language of the official books, is a town of 30,000 inhabitants, the head-quarters of a District, the terminus of the Rangoon-Prome Railway. It is equipped with a Municipality, a Jail, a Court House, Waterworks, and various other blessings of the kind commonly provided by a conscientious, hard-working, tax-collecting Government. Blue-books describe annually the progress it has made along the path of civic virtue, and long pages record its statistics to some unknown end. If there be any one to whom the assimilation of such knowledge is of profit, he is respectfully referred to these sources. The purpose of this chapter is but to glance very briefly at the past of one of the oldest cities of Burma.

Like Pegu, Prome is linked with prophecy by a pious people. In the Great Royal Chronicle of the Kings of Burma, it is related that the Lord Buddha stood in the fifth year of his enlightenment on the

Po-u-daung Hill overlooking the city, and while he stood there he saw a piece of cow-dung floating upon the sea. There approached him at this moment, full of humble devotion, a mole. Seeing him the master smiled, and on being asked by his faithful disciple, Ananda, why he did so, he replied:

"My beloved Ananda, after I have attained to Nirvana, and after the Religion has flourished a hundred and one years, five great events will happen.

"1. There will be a great earthquake.

"2. A great lake will appear below this point on which we stand.

"3. A river called Samon-Samyeik will appear.

"4. The Popa Hill will rise up through the up heaval of the earth.

"5. The sea will recede from the land on which Thare-kettaya will be built in after times, and the mole before us will be reincarnated as Duttabaung, king of the city, and from his reign will date the establishment of my religion in Burma."

In this ingenuous form is the memory of distant facts enshrined by a simple people.

That Popa was upheaved by volcanic action, and that the sea once washed the hills of Prome, are facts beyond any dispute. But how it is that the Burmese memory of them goes so far back as it does, is a mystery which remains at least partially unsolved. For Popa is believed to have been extinct many thousand years, and the Burmese are unacquainted with volcanoes. The retreat of the sea is fixed at a comparatively recent date, some fifteen hundred years ago.

The mole, working out his destiny, came in the fulness of time to rule at Thare-kettaya, which he built four hundred and forty-three years before the birth of Christ. Its name has to do with a very ancient artifice.

"Facti de nomine byrsam taurino quantum possent circumdare tergo."

Some five hundred and fifty years later Thare-kettaya

THE RIVER EDGE

was destroyed in one of those racial struggles between the diverse but kindred peoples of Burma with which Burmese history is punctuated. The present city, Prome, grew up in its neighbourhood, and from time to time became the capital of a kingdom; but the little State wedged in here between Pagān, Ava, and Pegu never rose to their distinction, and for the most part it

existed only as an appanage, either of the one or the other. Repeatedly besieged by the contending parties, it reached a crisis in its fortunes in the year 1541, when it was taken by the armies of Pegu under the generalship of Bureng Naung—the famous Branginoco.

Of this event there is an account by the opulent Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, who professes to have been an eye-witness of the siege.

"The King of Bramaa," he says, "had been now five days before the city of Prom, when as the Queen that Governed the State in the place of her husband, seeing herself thus besieged, sent to visit this her enemy with a rich jewel of precious stones, which was presented unto him by a Talagrego, or religious man of above an hundred years old, who was held amongst them for a saint," with an offer of homage if the city were spared.

The negotiations proved fruitless. As on so many other occasions in Burmese history, the holy man was received with consideration, but the secular purpose of the King was inflexibly pursued.

"The time then being come," continues Pinto, "which was the 3rd of May 1545, about an hour before day the King went out of his quarter, where he was at anchor upon the river with two thousand vessels of choice men, and giving the signal to the Commanders which were on land to prepare themselves, they all together in one body assailed the walls, with so great a cry, as if heaven and earth would have come together; so that both sides falling to encounter pell-mell with one another, there was such a conflict betwixt them, as

within a little while the air was seen all on fire, and the earth all bloody; whereunto being added the clashing of weapons, and noise of guns, it was a spectacle so dreadful, that we few Portugals who beheld these things remained astonished, and almost besides ourselves."

"The second trial continued till night, yet would not the King desist from the fight, but swore not to give over the enterprise begun, and that he would lie that night within the enclosure of the city walls, or cut off the heads of all those Commanders that were not wounded at their coming off. In the meantime, this obstinacy was very prejudicial to him, but continuing the assault till the moon was gone down, which was two houfs past midnight, he was then forced to sound a retreat, after he had lost in this assault, as was the next day found upon a muster, fourscore thousand of his men, besides those which were hurt, which were thirty thousand at the least, whereof many died for want of dressing; whence issued such a plague in the camp, as well through the corruption of the air, as the water of the river (that was all tainted with blood and dead bodies) that thereby about fourscore thousand more perished, amongst whom were five hundred Portugals, having no other buriall than the bodies of vultures, crows, and such like birds of prey."

After this first assault, bombardment was resorted to, and eighty pieces of ordnance were brought to play upon the devoted city for the space of nine days. The garrison, driven to desperation, sallied out "and fought so valiantly that in less than half an hour the whole

camp was put in disorder, the terrace gained, the fourscore pieces of cannon taken, the King himself hurt, the pallisades burnt, the trenches broken, and the Xenimbrum General of the army slain, with above fifteen thousand men more, amongst the which were five hundred Turks."

To treachery on the part of one of its garrison the ultimate fate of the city is ascribed.

"This treason so concluded," says Pinto, "was effected on the 23rd of August, in the year 1545, wherein this Tyrant of Bramaa carried himself with all the barbarousness and cruelty that he used to practise in the like cases. The gate was opened, the city delivered up, the inhabitants all cut to pieces, without so much as sparing one; the King and Queen made prisoners, their treasure taken, the buildings and temples demolished, and many other inhumanities exercised with such outrageousness, the belief whereof is beyond the imagination and thought of men; and truly I never represent unto myself in what manner it was done, as having seen it with mine own eyes, but that I remain astonished and besides myself at it. After the bloudy ruine of that wretched city, the Tyrant entered into it in great pomp and as it were in triumph, through a breach that was made of purpose in the wall and by his express commandment."

For particulars of the subsequent horrors, and details of the King's orgie of cruelty, the philosophical reader is referred to the original.

In the course of the first and second Burmese wars, in 1825, and in 1852, Prome offered some resistance,

and traces of its military occupation may still be seen on the eminence overlooking the town. Let us turn rather to a pleasing account of the little town given by a British Ambassador who visited it a hundred years ago.

"Prompted," he says, "by curiosity to view a place so renowned as Prome is in Birman history, for having been the scene of many long sieges and bloody conflicts, as soon as my boat was made fast I hastened on shore, and a short way from the bank entered a long strait street in which I walked for nearly a mile. The buildings were not remarkable; but though I saw little to notice, I found that I was myself an object of universal wonder. My attendants also created no little surprise; the dogs set up a horrid barking: the men gaped, the children followed me, and the women, as usual, expressed their astonishment by loud laughter, and clapping their hands; yet not the least indication of contempt was manifested nor anything done that could be construed into an intention to offend. Which ever way I turned, the crowd respectfully opened and the most forward were restrained by others. The notice I took of a little girl, who was alarmed at our appearance, seemed to be very gratifying to the parents, and the mother encouraging her child, brought her close to me.

"Had I entered a house, I have no doubt but the owners would have offered me the best of what it contained. Kindness to strangers is equally the precept and the practice of Birmans."

CHAPTER II

THARE-KETTAYA

A Minister

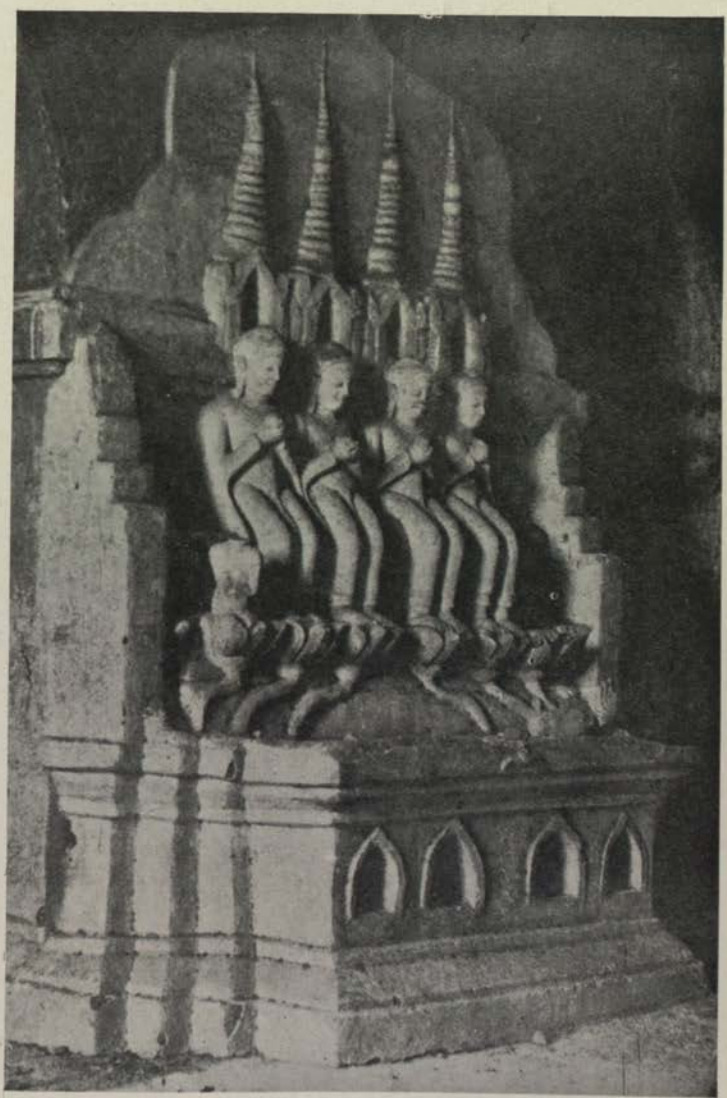
FROM the living, one turns to the dead city.

The road, sheltered by tamarind avenues, passes by the fore-paws of the great gryphons of the pagoda, by little wooden houses growing scarcer as the town limits are reached, and so over the level crossing under flowering teaks, till the first of the ancient pagodas looms up, a ruin covered with dense verdure, and surmounted by a new *hti* of gold.

Beyond this point the road divides. On the left it stretches away across the rice-fields and the forest, the King's highway to Thayet-myo. On the right it runs over undulating country, through gaunt avenues of palms, till it reaches the border of the ancient city, and then for a mile it runs along the ramparts. All that is left of Thare-kettaya lies to the right—at this season (August) a sea of green rice under the open heavens. Palm-clusters make islands on its surface, and hidden amidst them are the huts of the people.

From a painting by J. R. Middleton.

AN OFFERING OF ROSES FOR THE PAGODA.



THEIR LOTUS THRONES

Time, which has effected so much, has been powerless with the great walls of the city. Like all good work, they endure. The march of armies, the assaults of invaders, are no longer of any consequence to those who live here on this immemorial site; but the old walls help to keep the floods of the Gna-win at bay, and lift the modern highway far above the reach of the waters; no small immunity at this season, when all the low country is turned into a lake.

Outside the walls the floods have swept the fields, and the young rice-plants sway and fester in the back-waters, and are swept with fury through the gaps in the highways left open for the escape of the flood. Far as the eye can reach from east to west of the Nattalin road there is a waste of waters. The sky is overcast with storm-clouds of a lowering purple. Flights of white paddy-birds wing their way between sky and water, and herds of half wild buffaloes shuffling down the island-like road take with sudden fear to the water, and are borne like straws through the narrow gateways.

A ruined pagoda rising up out of the waste, alone testifies that in a bygone day a royal city had its being here.

CHAPTER III

PO-U-DAUNG

A Minister of the King

HIGHEST of seven hills that overlook the city of Prome from across the Irrawaddy, Po-u-daung is where the Buddha stood to utter his famous prophecy. We know what, according to the legend, he saw from there. Let us see what has taken its place.

In the north, there is the river making a pear-shaped oval beyond a wooded promontory. One can follow its windings far, as it bears grandly down from outlying space. In the east towards Prome it lies in a long direct line bounded on its farther side by a green and undulating country, which ends in the blue outlines of the Pegu hills. There is a little village on this farther shore; a little river making red loops, in the first of which the village stands; a cluster of red roofs in a grove of trees. On a small eminence near it there is a white pagoda and a monastery. Behind it—a lake of green paddy, patterned into fields. The whole, a Burmese village seen in miniature,

The vision to the south is barred by the wooded continuation of the hill, but here and there the great river is disclosed, winding its way in silver coils. And away to the setting sun there is a great space of hill country, richly wooded, but without trace of human habitation, which stretches out to the mountains of Aracan.

Over all this the clouds trail in long streamers and masses, and the air is laden with the swish of rain. The sun gleams and pales as the clouds wander, and the landscape reflects on its beautiful face every phase of the music of light and shadow played on the heavens. The thickets are resonant with the voices of birds: the congregational murmur of the turtle-dove, the soft song of the warblers, the hammer-note of the wood-pecker.

Below the pagoda there is a small *zayat*, in which two monks from Prome are keeping their Lent. Little wonder that they come here to this tranquil and beautiful spot. A man with any meditative quality in his spirit, any eye for colour and form, could not fail of being content here. But he would need to look away from the splendour of the world, while his spirit sought relief in meditation, lest the sheer physical beauty of his environment should become supreme in his heart; and it is to be noticed that the Lenten Monks have hidden all away from their vision save the tapering outline of the pagoda and the "hermit's cap" of rock, on which two moles are sculptured in an attitude of adoration. A basket of rice, some bowls and cups, great jars of water and a golden figure of

the Buddha are all they have brought with them from the city below.

Here they dream away the Lenten months, and it may be that the indolent life yields compensation in a growth of the inner vision. In such an atmosphere of peace, in this far seclusion from the sordid struggle of life, the spirit must grow in grace and tranquillity.

AT A PAGODA GATE

One can understand the story of the recluse who lived up here on one of these hills without ever descending into the world for fifty years. It is said that he never saw a white man. Great changes came into the world of which he once formed a part; battles were fought and won in the neighbouring cities—the sound of guns must often have reached his ears—fleets and armies passed up the great river encircling three-fourths of his horizon; embassies and rulers came and went. But all these were as nothing to him. History, gorgeous and tragic, deployed her splendid pages before his eyes. What had he to do with her?

Phases were these of the curse of existence; aspects of the incarnate life which fetters the spirit: vanities and vexation. Half a century passed away under his untroubled gaze, till in the end there came his own release—a release he longed to believe would be eternal.

Let us call it if we please a selfish, a morbid, an abnormal life. Let us remember also that there is a wide gulf between the mind of such a man and that of his fretful, strenuous European neighbour ever reaching after material conquests, which mere epithets will not bridge.

The base of the pagoda is encircled by a low wall in the form of a double-coiled dragon, and there is on the platform a white marble footprint of the Buddha. Sheer precipices descend on every side. The view is far-reaching and splendid, and it filled with pride the King who looked down from this height on the kingdom at his feet. He had just come from the cold-blooded murder of a helpless captive; yet the circumstance only added to his pride.

In a brick enclosure, open towards the river, is a large stone engraved with the tale of his titles and dominions; with the fame of the Emperor Sin-byu-shin. It is in the square lettering that explains the origin of the Burmese circular alphabet. Quick green ferns, the growth of a day, cluster about its base. It has been here a hundred years. The outer surface of the stone on which the letters are graven is wearing away, and a century hence little if any trace will remain of the titles of the proud King. A century has effaced the splendour of his house, and the independence of his race; a century hence his successors, we who rule here, may also have departed. The shadows of the centuries come and go, and men leave little trace.

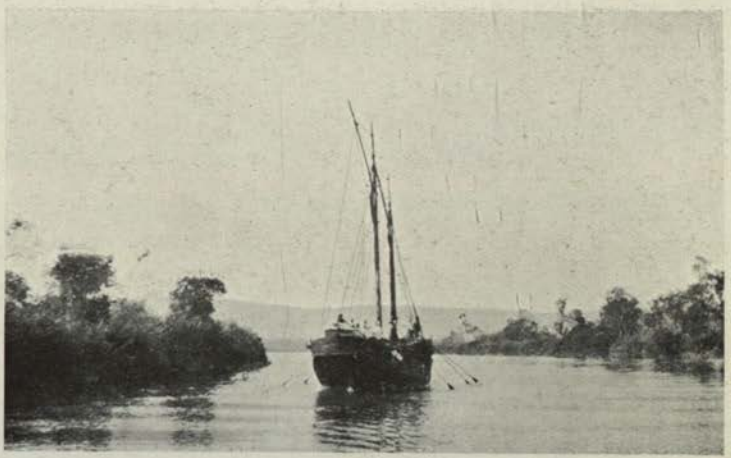
Thare-kettaya is invisible from here; yet two thousand years ago, the eye, as it roamed the vast spaces, rested

on the walls and spires of the old city; and before that again, when, as the legend personifying great changes, says, the Buddha stood here, there was only the Sea. "Change, Sorrow, Unreality"; the sad litany seems written in imperishable words on the very face of this beautiful world, expanding here before one's eyes. And how small are the greatest edifices of the distant city from here! How trifling the steamships creeping up the noble river! How slowly the immortal current moves!

PANEL IN A MONASTERY WALL

At the foot of the hill, on the banks of the river, is a little *zayat* in which one can pass the day. It has neither doors nor windows; it is open to the world. A small stream beside it runs babbling down to the silent river; the doves come and go alighting on the sun-clad tree-stems, butterflies flash from the purple creepers; a faint wind blows all through the day. It is no warmer than on a summer day in Southern France, and it would be cooler, if the roof of the *zayat* were not made of imported iron.

A BURMESE VILLAGE



EN ROUTE

BOOK IV

The Capitals of the South

Thatôn—
Pegu—
Mergui

CHAPTER I

THATÔN

I. EN ROUTE

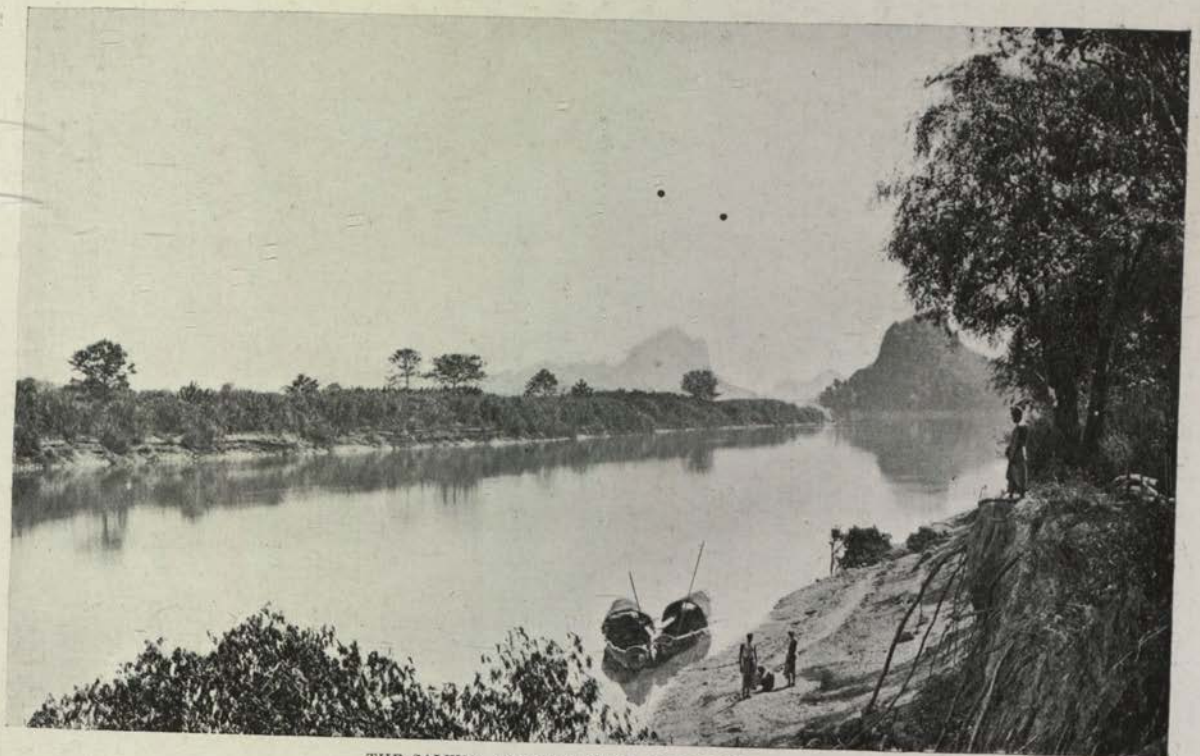
A Maid-of-Honour

THE steamer for Thatôn leaves at ten every morning, save on Sundays, when the crew and the skipper, under a Christian dispensation, take their rest. The skipper is a Mahomedan with a red fez, and the crew are lascars from Chittagong. They do their work in their own way, the typical Eastern way ; easily, indolently, but not without ability. You will see the skipper of a morning, seated *à la Turque* high up on the white railings of the ship, with a scrap of fluttering paper and a pencil in his hand, jotting down particulars of the cargo as it comes aboard. The "sea-cunny," in an embroidered purple bolero, glides about with an old Bollinger quart full of green paint, and a bit of stick, with which he inscribes hieroglyphics on the incoming cases. He is a smart-looking man with a touch of daring in his face, and you would know him anywhere for a sailor. When the steamer moves he takes his place at the

wheel, and steers her over the shallows with unfailing skill.

The half-hour before the start is fruitful in picturesque scenes. Down the long hog-backed pontoon the passengers come one by one, a motley crowd. Here are the children of the soil, gay, lively, and debonnair, but none too numerous; an old and wild-looking man of weather-beaten face, a *tawtha*, or son of the jungle; next after him a plump and comely woman with a great white cheroot in her mouth, pearl earrings large as florins in her ears, and pyramids of diamonds on her fingers—nothing of the jungle about her. A little experience of Western life, and she would be fit for any drawing-room in Europe; for behind the jewels lie the breeding and aplomb of her race. A little maid of seven walks demurely beside her, the picture of a human doll. A couple of young women on the wharf carry on an active flirtation with a traveller on the upper deck of the steamer, while they keep an eye for any passing admirer, after the manner of women who flirt. Of such is the Burmese company.

A smart Chinaman, the son of a Burmese mother, comes next. One can see that he is emancipated and up to date. Yellow London boots, white Chinese trousers, a dark coat with a flower in its button-hole, a soft felt hat, and in his hand a hunting-crop, which he swings rather freely about him, careless of the old men who sit in his way, are symptoms of his personality. He is an Inspector of Post Offices, a good fellow, but a little new. Then there is a medley of Indians; a Mulla from Chittagong in a long saffron caftan, with



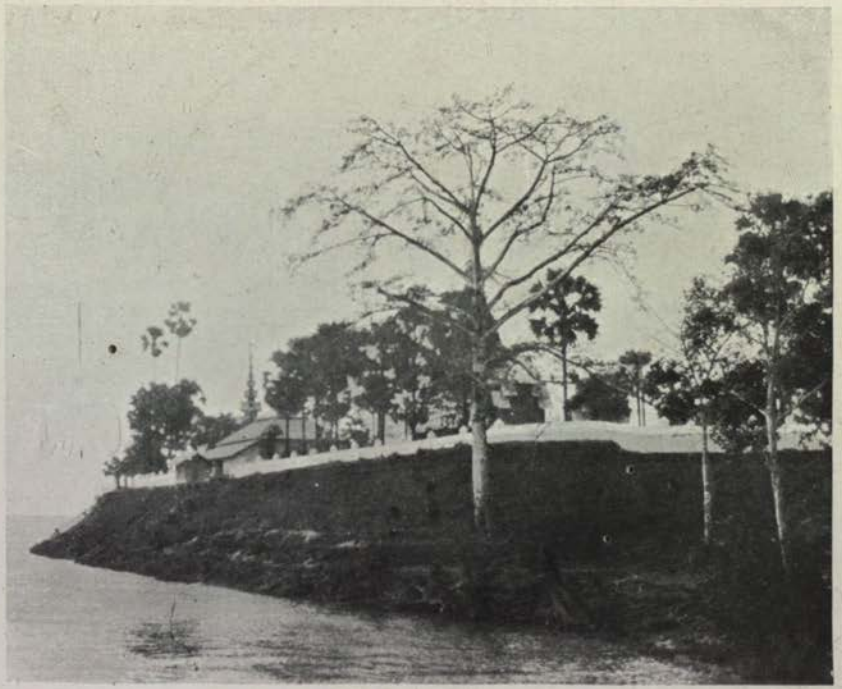
THE SALWIN AND THE DUKE OF YORK'S NOSE

the air of a refined and travelled man. For he has seen the Taj, and has looked upon the departed glory of the Emperors. His people, he says, are faithful and devout; but he admits their gift of lying. "In all religions, sir," he observes sententiously, "it is written, 'Lie not, lest ye go to Hell.'" In spite of his rich yellow coat and fashionable appearance, he carries with him the unmistakable atmosphere of a priest. Besides the people of his own race, there are Moslems from other lands on board; Chulias from Madras, with shaven skulls and Kinkhwab caps that look like hammered gold; Suratis from Bombay in pink satin and embroidered coats; and yet others in green waistcoats and flowing robes, who, whatever be the race they stand for now, carry on their faces the hall-mark of the negro-Arab; a history eloquent of piracy and slave-driving in some bygone generation.

THE MULLAH

A woman from Madras goes to and fro, up the narrow stairs, the very type of splendid carnal woman-

hood, with the figure of a Caryatid and the lithe grace of a hunting-leopard. Her costume of stark reds and yellows, against her dark skin, is in startling contrast with the pale rose-pinks, the delicate hues that are characteristic of the less primitive Burmese.



PAST MARTABAN

And thus in a little while the motley company, typical of the destiny of the Burmese race, is assembled, and the ship is full. The anchor-chains rattle, the steam whistle shrieks, the gangway planks are pulled in, and a sudden throbbing in the ship, a gust of cool air, tell us that we are under weigh. It takes but a moment to attain full speed on these river steamers, and we are

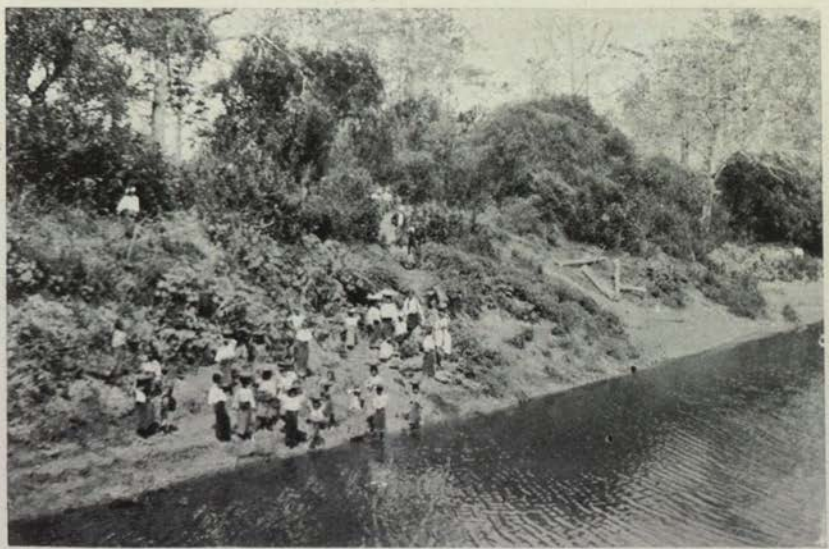
soon racing over the water to Martaban. Past its white pagoda glittering with new gold, its clustering palms, vermilion *tazoungs*, and white-winged stairs descending to the water, we enter the narrower waters of the Dundami. The Zingyaik hills deploy in line upon our left, and bear us good company, their sharpest peak

PASSENGERS

crowned by a pagoda clearly visible against the sky. The Zway-kabin, known to a vulgar generation as "The Duke of York's Nose," comes nearer with every mile of our ascent: the commanding summit of a line of broken and irregular hills. Other peaks of the same fantastic character loom up on the horizon, and in the east, faintly visible through the January mists, rise the mountains which guard the Salwin and the frontiers of

Siam. On the left bank there is a low-lying country between the scattered hills and the river, laden with tall grasses and set with wild cotton trees, and singularly like the north country far away between Bhamo and Myitkina.

The width of the Dundami, as we proceed up it, is broken by many an island, and the navigable channel



WAITING FOR THE STEAMER

grows less and less. Every moment adds to the beauty of the scene. The winding vista of water and bending river grasses and trees tasselled with red fruit, ends in a blue mass of mountain and valley, and the face of the steamer is turned east and west in rapid alternation. The wash racing after it plunges madly against the banks, or breaks in curling foam on the shallows, scaring into flight whole troops of white egrets, and

the slow wide-eyed cattle on the shore. On the islands, cultivated by Karen, there are rustling fields of maize and beans, and tasselled rows of chillies, and acres of green tobacco. As the steamer pauses for a moment, our gaze is turned somewhat ruthlessly on the occupants of a small homestead at work in the fields. The man is a great rough-hewn savage with the wrinkled face

A HAMLET IDYLL ON THE DUNDAMI

of a peasant, the woman is old, withered, and ugly; their child, by some miracle, is like a little field-flower in its artless beauty.

A cargo-boat with a red Venetian sail drifts down, filling half the river with its pride. Village canoes steal along by the reedy banks, in terror of the turbulent steamer, long boats with straining oars make hard

progress against wind and tide, and half way up to Duyinzeik the homing steamer races past us down the narrow river. We stop at villages and hamlets on our way to drop a passenger, or pick one up.

The company on board amuse themselves, each after

TAUNG-THUS, OLD STYLE AND NEW

his own fashion. The "son of the jungle" stares about him like a yokel, taking his fill of the new wonders of steam, and swift travel, and elegant company. The town girls flirt—'tis an unending joy—the old women gossip and smoke, the Mulla slumbers, save at the appointed hours, when he rises up to pray. So the

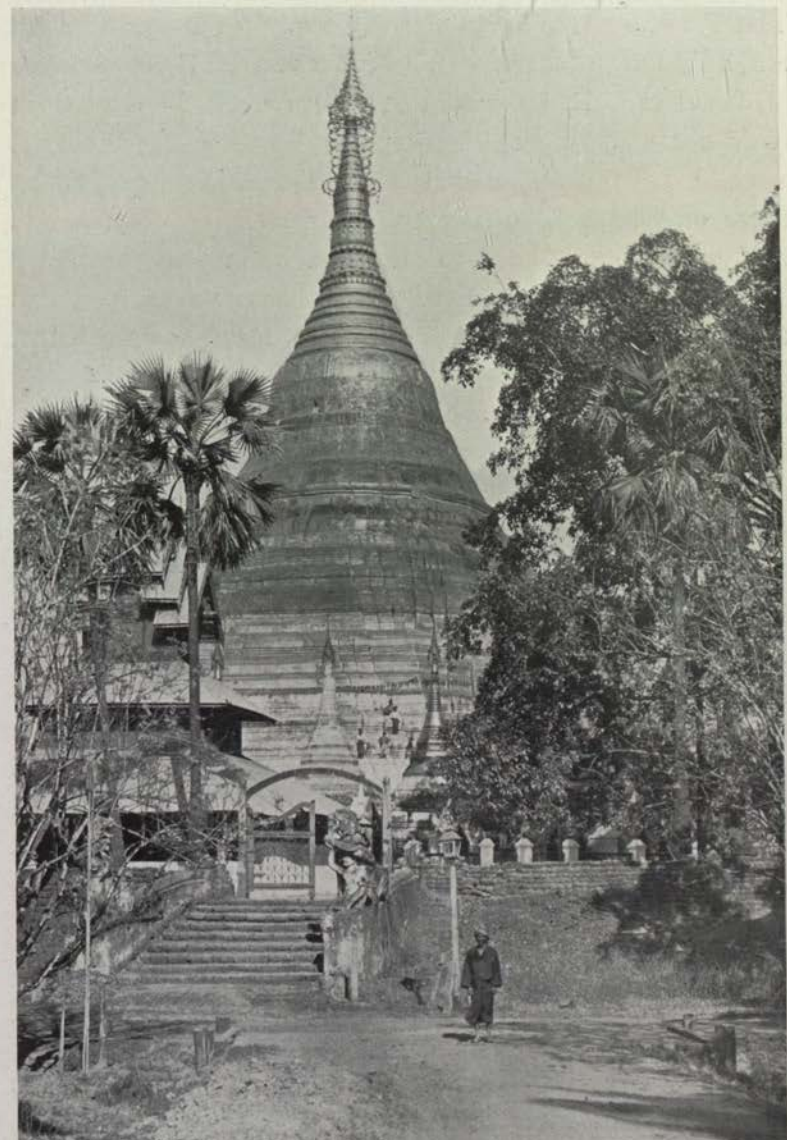
day passes, and there is no strain on any man's face, and no one is in a hurry, and mutual courtesy seems to be the rule, all the way up the shining river between the waving grasses and the blue hills to Duyinzeik.

From Duyinzeik a toy railway, swaying and rattling on its way, bears all those who are bound for Thatôn, through the rugged jungle and through a gut in the Thinganek hills, till it comes upon the site of the ancient city.

II. THE ANCIENT CITY

The beginning of things in Thatôn is wrapt in a mist of ignorance; and until some scholar versed in the fast-dying language of the Talaing attempts its history, there is likely to be little more than legend and conjecture to go upon. Some would assign to it a venerable and a famous past; for they would attribute to it the glory of Ophir. But there are many cities that compete for this distinction, and it appears unlikely that Solomon, reputed to be wise, would have sent his ships so far to sea for that which lay nearer to his hand. Nevertheless there is a charm in the old-time name of the city, and of the province that surrounds it—"Suvanabhumi, the Golden Land"—as it falls from the lips of some humble inhabitant familiar thus far with its classic past.

The native histories, ever liberal with time, assign the beginning of the city to a period seventeen hundred years before Christ, but a Talaing tradition clipping its antiquity by eleven hundred years brings its foundation under the auspices of Siharaja, a contemporary of Gautama



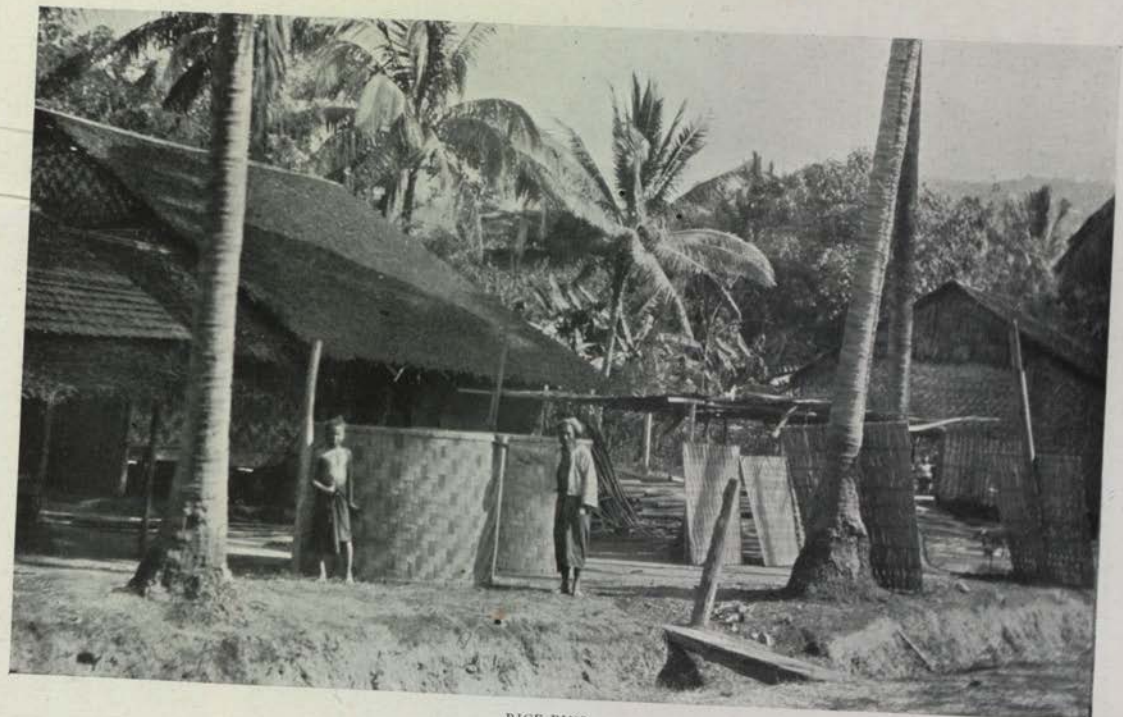
THE SHWÉ-ZAYAN PAGODA

Buddha, to a date near the end of the sixth century. The Talaing or Môn were already in occupation of the soil, but intercourse between them and the peoples of Southern India was frequent; and it is related in their chronicles that Thatôn was founded by Siharaja, a child born of a dragon on the sea-shore, and found there and brought up by the sons of King Tissa, who had come from India to dwell as hermits in the land. The Môn were still a wild and barbarous people, and their first lessons in religion and civilisation were learnt from those who came to them from India.

The city, whatever its origin, grew in fame and importance, for it was specially chosen as a field for missionary labours at the Third Buddhist Council of Asoka. The missionaries, Sona and Uttara, were chosen to cross the sea to Suvana-bhumi, there to preach the gospel of Buddha to its people. They landed at Thatôn (or Taikkala), then a city on the sea, and in these romantic words of Ptolemy there is perhaps a direct reference to Thatôn :

"Immediately after leaving the Ganges there is an island in the ocean called Khrusê, or the Golden Isle, which lies directly under the rising sun and at the extremity of the world towards the East."

The subsequent history of Thatôn is difficult of construction, but it appears certain that it grew in power, importance, and civilisation. So much at least we may assume from the ruins of its great walls, which still meet the eye, and the pagodas of hewn stone, which served as a model for the greater edifices of Pagān. Pegu, whose splendour in later centuries was to dazzle



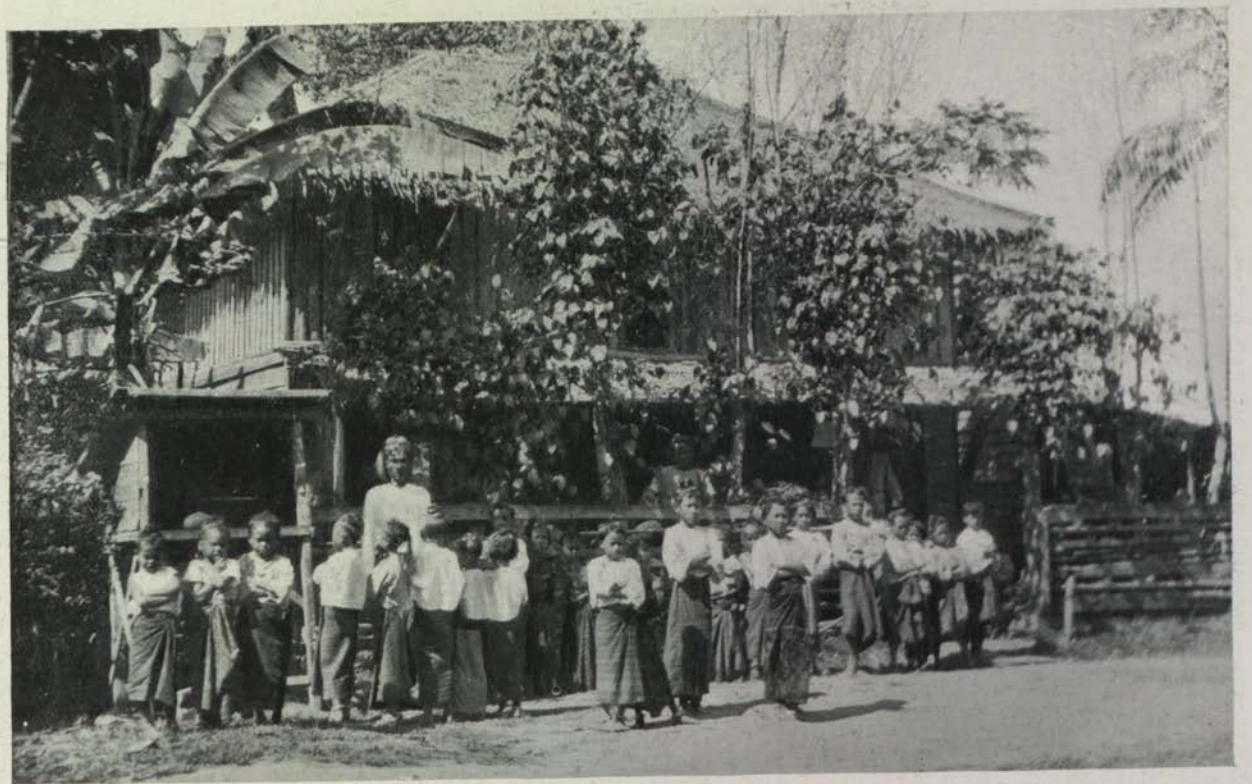
RICE-BINS

the imagination of European travellers and make it known throughout the civilised world, was in its beginnings an offspring of Thatôn, a colony of its people. And even before the founding of Pegu, it seems probable that the kingdom of Prome, from whose ashes there rose Pagān, was conquered by the rulers of Thatôn.

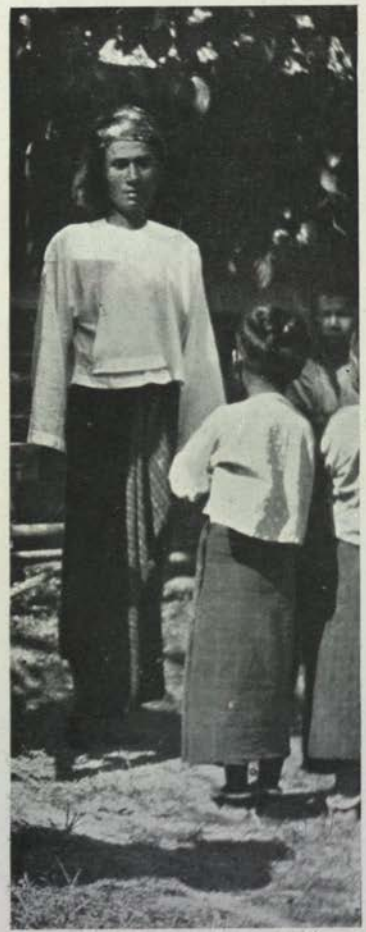
WEAVER GIRLS

Its religious supremacy throughout this period remained unchallenged; alone of all the cities of Burma it possessed a copy of the Tripitaka, the Buddhist scriptures, and from it as a centre there spread a spiritual influence over the growing States on its borders.

It offers a curious illustration of the irony of history;



THE LAY-SCHOOL



THE SCHOOLMASTER

for its fall is directly attributed to its zeal for religion, and to its possession of the Sacred Books. A copy of these books was demanded in the year 1050 A.D. by Anawrata, King of Pagān. His request was refused, and Anawrata, "with a sudden fierceness altogether opposed to the spirit of the religion which he had embraced, determined to punish what he deemed an affront. He collected a large army and went down the Irrawaddy. The King of Thatôn had no means of meeting the invader in the field, but the city was well defended by a wall. After a long siege the citizens were reduced by famine and the city was surrendered. King Manuha, his wives, and children were carried away captives to Pagān. The city was utterly destroyed. Nobles and artificers, holy relics and Sacred Books, golden images and treasures of all kinds were carried off; and from that time the country of Pegu became for more than two centuries subject to Burma. As a fit sequence to such a war, the unhappy Manuha, his whole family and the high-born captives were thrust down to

the lowest depth of woe by being made pagoda slaves."

There is no incident in Burmese history more notable than this, none which has left a deeper impression on the memory of the people; and there is scarcely a peasant from Ava to the sea who is not familiar with the story of King Anawrata's conquest of Thatôn. At Pagān itself the crumbling walls of King Manuha's palace, with carvings of fine stone within, and the presence of a lineal descendant of the captive king, still known as a Prince and still a pagoda slave, clothe the old story with a singular reality. But since the downfall of Manuha, the ancient city—most ancient, it would seem, of all the cities of Burma—has never again held up its head.

Its life is in the past, and its glory has departed.

PRIZE PUPILS

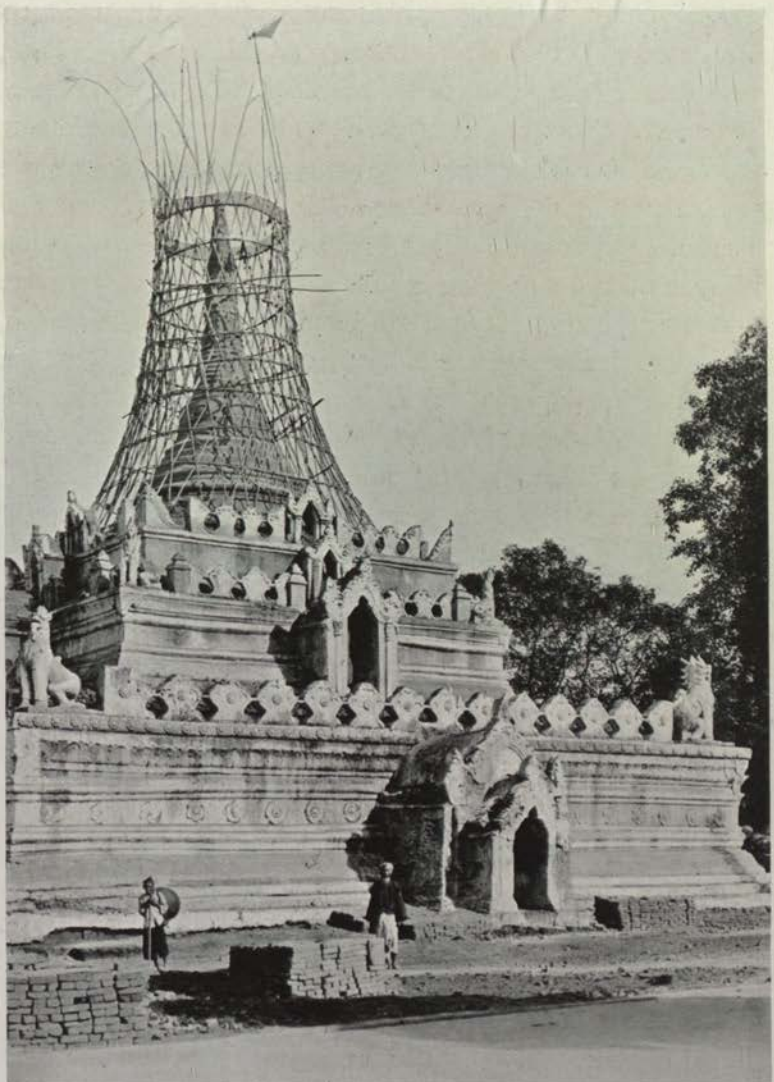
III. THATÔN TO-DAY

It is the turn of the harvest season, and Thatôn, with its new-found rice-plains stretching far to sea, is rejoicing in the produce of its toil.

Under the wayside palms and under the eaves of the trim cottages, the unhusked rice lies in great encircling bins of mat, a ruddy yellow in

the sun. Prosperity is in their contour, and in the faces of the people there is an ample reflection. The roads and pathways of the city are sheltered by groves of giant bamboo and avenues of horseradish in bloom. Glistening Jack-trees heavy with elephantine fruit, delicate betel-palms with overhanging foliage and clusters of orange-coloured nuts, gardens of marigolds and roses, make many of the little houses beautiful. Under the pent-roofs of some there are weaving-looms, and comely Taung-thu girls with soft round faces are at work on the lustrous silk. Here and there a withered elder, with sparse silver hair, ambles about in the sunlight, clothed in the fast disappearing national garb of the Taung-thu people. Here by the roadside is a lay-school for boys and girls, very trim with its rows of betel-vines and palms, its roses, and its waterpots for the use of the passing wayfarer. Within sits the schoolmaster at a little table garnished with printed books and slates, a bottle of comfits, and a small hand-bell. On the floor, their noses to their books, sprawl the scholars. It is a room, open to the passing world, and strangely decorated with German colour-prints of the most incongruous character. But these pictures are a source of pride to their owner, and one can only smile at the strange collection. To the small world on the floor they are a source of unqualified delight. There is an air of general happiness about the school. It is a household of children, from the refined-looking master to the sturdy urchins, culled from half a dozen races.

We pass on to the Shwé-zayan Pagoda, whose golden bulk and tapering spire, most conspicuous landmark



THE LIBRARY UNDER REPAIR

in Thatôn, mark the centre of its classic past. Almost as we enter its great walled court we come upon the Bidaghat-taik, the Royal Library of Manuha of Thatôn and the receptacle of those sacred books the possession of which brought upon him and his race the heavy hand of the conqueror. Five elephant-loads, say the people to this day, were carried away from here to Pagān. The Shwé-zayan, enclosing within itself more ancient edifices, is of modern, but graceful appearance. Its entire court of vast dimensions is surrounded by a wall of hewn laterite. At the southern stairs there are kneeling figures of men upholding lions rampant very boldly executed. A pipul-tree of gigantic size spreads its foliage over the highway and the eastern wall. Men say that it has been here since the days of Manuha, and that it sheltered the picquets and the horsemen of Anawrata the Great.

Beyond it, and within the shadow of the Shwé-zayan, rise the oldest pagodas of Thatôn. The best of these is the Thagya-paya, of cut stone, in three square terraces surmounted by a modern spire. In its original form this spire was a *stupa*, and the whole edifice was of the type of the Sinhalese *dagaba*. It is a structure of no little beauty, and the fine tracery of its walls, the clay entablatures which line its processional terraces, make it of peculiar interest to the seeker after the past. Many of the tablets, composed of figures in relief, have either disappeared or they have suffered from the attrition of time. Enough remain to furnish some very interesting particulars. Here is a ruler sitting under umbrellas, while a man on his left kneels and talks to

THE THAGYA-PAYA

him with a smile on his countenance. In front of the kneeling figure is something which looks like an offering. Below, there is a pony tied to a post, and an attendant kneeling. Here again is a king seated on his throne with persons kneeling before him. In the background a man is undergoing punishment with the elbow. Many

PHO-PHO AND HIS CLIENTS

of the details suggest a Hindu origin; but the message these tablets have to convey has not yet been read. Near these pagodas and within the courtyard walls are tanks dug deep into the laterite soil, whence the blocks of which they are built were excavated. At the bottom of one of them tradition places a great bell.

PHO-PHO'S SON

A narrow causeway of flagged stones, trodden by many worshippers, leads away from the Shwé-zayan Pagoda, and we pass on in the wake of the silken crowd of white-haired elders, and monks in swaying saffron robes, to where a gut in the ruined walls marks the site of the old southern gate of the city. Here, within call of the rattling trains, resides Pho-pho, the guardian spirit of Thatôn. He is an old man with a pointed beard and a kindly face. Beside him there sits a governor or *Wun* in full official dress, and facing the Wun on the opposite side of the road, the morning sunlight falling in long bars across his person, is a military magnate in uniform. The fourth and last apartment is an open shed with no figure within, but only a post covered with gilt paper and little flags.

A TABLET FROM THE THAGYA-PAYA

Most of the worshippers here are women; a mother with her child, a group of withered matrons, a young and laughing girl with new flowers in her hair. They come with trays of offerings in the form of rice, and plantains, and waxen tapers, and the crows make away

A TAUNG-THU PROCESSION

with the food as quickly as it is offered at the shrine. They perch unmolested but ever vigilant on the heads and shoulders of the Nats, while the wayfarers go by in and out of the old city.

They are a highly interesting community these guardian spirits of Thatôn. They are venerated not alone by the Buddhists of the city, but by all classes and creeds; and the travelled Shan from the hill countries is as devout in asking their countenance, as the sleek Chittagonian or the black Coringhi. A medium in whose custody the Nats repose, makes a goodly living by his vocation, and an annual festival held in their honour is largely attended. Tradition assigns to them a European origin. Once upon a time, it is said, the city of Thatôn was governed and protected from its enemies by a Portuguese and his son. The memory of their valour and their benevolence has survived amongst a grateful people; and when they are in tribulation they make an offering at the shrines, and ask for succour or a sign. The smile that comes upon the face of the old man Pho-pho on such occasions is a sure augury that all will be well. Thus, when war was abroad in Burma in the year 1885, and the Taungthus, mindful of past oppression, feared lest the English armies should be crushed by the might of the King at Mandalay, they came with much searching of hearts and many gifts to the shrine of their traditional protector. The old Portuguese smiled benignly upon them, and they came away reassured. He also, they remembered, had been a European. There would seem indeed to have been a considerable burden of scepti-

cism upon the shoulders of Thatôn about this period as to the ultimate triumph of the British arms. A cautious Chinaman who was building a store for the

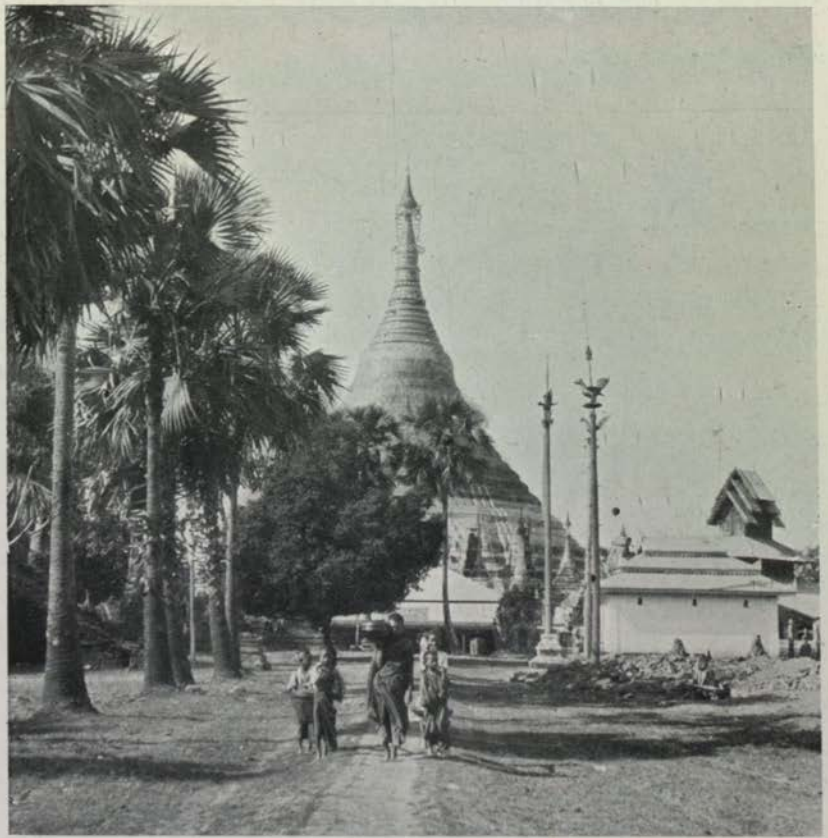
OLD TAUNG-THU WOMAN AT THE WELL

sale of European commodities to the English residents suspended his efforts. "I will wait," he said, "till I hear that Mandalay has fallen."

From these religious haunts the tide of life makes, as the day grows, for the British centre of the town. A Jubilee fountain, erected to the memory of the greatest monarch Thatôn has ever known, plays in the sunlight on the site of the old-time palace of Siharaja and Manuha, where now there stand in precise array the symbols and edifices of the new régime. Along the red roads where the new macadam marks the ancient highways of the city, comes the stream of those who traffic with British law; the prisoner in clanking chains, rueful, in the custody of Indian policemen; the new advocate in his dog-cart and in his newest clothes, driving as if he meant to catch a fox; the old headman of a neighbouring village, quiet and dignified, but a little frightened at being summoned to the presence of the Ayé-baing—"the Power-holder."

Under the long red roof of the Court-house a horde of clerks is at work, grinding out the shibboleths of a foreign bureaucracy. They sit in their little cages, with piled statistics and bewildering forms spread all about them; and in time, when by such diligence they attain to greater office, they come earnestly to believe that they have helped to rule an Empire. Maybe they have. The chiefest galley slave of them all is the Ayé-baing, the English head of the District, who is expected to toil alike at oar and rudder. He must be an expert clerk, he must be a judge versed in the subtleties of the law, he must be an ardent accountant, he must be a humorist, and he must, if the Empire he stands for is to go on enduring, be a man; he must try to remember that he represents in his person

the Majesty of Rule. Past him where he toils, the central street runs on to the far eastern wall and the edge of the long tank where the boat races are held. The great plains spread beyond, bare and brown, and



GOING FORTH TO BEG

the dust from them as it rises up under the creaking wheels of the carts is caught by the setting sun and turned to a mist of gold. Here, as on many a day, the evening closes in with extraordinary splendour, and the spectacle is one that the eye follows with

A SHAN PILGRIM

devotion. All the centre of the great arching dome of the sky is traversed by wisps of flaming cloud, which sweep along in grooves and spirals as if marking the rifle-track of the great projectile now rapidly disappearing over the horizon. High up overhead, the pale crescent moon, like a silver comet, follows swiftly in his wake.

All along the street under the eaves of the houses lie the racing boats, biding their time. The thoroughfares are crowded by a motley populace of water-carriers from Madras; of Coringhi scavengers; of Chinese tailors and cobblers, industrious by the wayside; of old men clanging little bells and calling upon the world for alms; of children, heedless of the traffic, at play in the centre of the street.

Past the Bazaar and the pagoda, the long road to Martaban cleaves its way, blue hills upon one side

of it, dun plains on the other. The vast monotony is broken here only by the dwindling line of the telegraph-posts, and in the foreground a caravan of creaking carts, laden with new grain. There are no villages here to cheer the wayfarer. It is all rice-land

A SON OF THE JUNGLE

of the richest, and the peasants who work it go many miles from their homes to their fields. Not long ago it was all sea, even this Martaban road. Here, the sea gives, and the sea takes away, and the contour of the land is perpetually changing. The toiling peasant,

as he ploughs the rich level soil, often runs his ploughshare upon mast and anchor, the relics of some Portuguese adventurer. Looking back from the dun fields, the eye rests gladly upon the golden spire of the pagoda, rising

A FOOTPRINT OF THE LORD

above the dark trees that shelter Thatôn. Bare as the level fields are, there is romance here; somewhat that makes one pause and look again, and yet again, across the vast monotony of plain reaching out to the invisible sea.

Another and wider view expands from the terraced pagoda which crowns a distant hilltop two thousand feet above the city. It is good to look upon, for the place is classic, and great changes have come here upon land and sea. Directly below us lies the ancient city, with its double moats and walls clearly traceable after the lapse of more than twenty centuries; its palace outlines, its main thoroughfares, straight and uncompromising now as they were then, its water tanks and its pagodas. Beyond, the great plain stretches away to the shimmering sea. The plain itself in its level stillness, and in the manner in which it creeps into every bay and curve of the mountains, is an image of the sea whose place it has taken.

OLD STYLE TAUNG-THUS

As the darkness comes on, a hundred fires flash out, and the whole land is illuminated with the conflagration of the stubble—the last scene of the harvest. North and south, towering up in peaks and precipices above the plain, and parallel with the far sea, stretch the mountains on which the pagoda is built. Their highest summit is only three thousand feet in altitude, but there is an Alpine grandeur of outline which lifts them into the category of mountains. Turning away from the city at our feet, and looking to where the sun will rise, our eyes rest upon a wild country of quite different character. Here the jungle still grows thick and close, and the footprints of man are little visible. The Dundami and the Salwin are hidden from sight; and out of the broken lowlands rise in shadowy fantastic forms, like the spectres of some bygone world, the limestone peaks and crags of the Zway-kabin.

Here, as from a hundred other vantage points in Burma, the view is of rare interest and beauty; comprehensive, and pregnant with appeals to the imagination. History lies spread at one's feet; the story of the vicissitudes of man, of the earth itself. From here one can picture almost without effort, so powerful is the stimulus of the scene, the birth-throes of the world; the thunder of volcanic forces; the struggle of the earth and sea; the first coming of man, his early struggles in the gloom of time, his gradual advance towards civilisation; the coming of strange ships across the ocean, the advent of the first missionaries, the founding of the royal city; thereafter, the long centuries (of which so faint a record survives) of prosperity and

adversity, of sinning and repentance, of busy life in this remote settlement on the shores of the easternmost seas, and so to the great *débâcle*, the advent of Anawrata the Conqueror. After that again, nine hundred years of obscurity and decline, till only a village of thirty houses remained; and then at last the coming of a new wave from the West, and the regeneration of to-day.

CARVING ON A MONASTERY DOOR

CARVING ON A MONASTERY DOOR

CHAPTER II

PEGU

I. THE ROAD TO PEGU

A Royal Page

THE train as it glides slowly out of Rangoon takes us through the remote suburb of Puzun-daung, past the tombstones of a bygone generation, and along the banks of the Puzun-daung creek, one of the many streams which, uniting below Rangoon, form that magnificent expanse of water to which the capital owes its greatness. From its banks here, there tower up the many-storied rice-mills, whose ceaseless throbbing fills the sky with clouds of iron-hued smoke. The mill-roofs are buried under a mantle of falling husks which gleams fair and yellow in the sun, in striking contrast with the black smoke-clouds trailing away to the horizon. There is a curious old-world suggestion about these windowed mills, with their husk-hidden attics and high sloping roofs; and plain though they are, they have a certain massive picturesqueness. Dominating the landscape by their vastness beside the humble tenements of the soil,

throbbing day and night with an energy that is immense, they are fit emblems of the new era; and there is in them a confident promise of success.

It is indeed from these gigantic habitations and from the crowded harbour, rather than from the thoroughfares of the city itself, that the stranger gathers some confirmation of the boast that is for ever on the lips of its citizens, of the greatness of Rangoon. And the mills and the shipping are intimately connected. To the mills from all the fat rice-lands of the lower province there flow with centripetal tendency the vast supplies of grain which make the surplus of its harvest; and in the ships, waiting like hounds in leash, the husked rice is borne away to distant harbours of the world.

THE SPIRE OF GOLD, PEGU

The train, gathering impetus as it emerges from the suburbs, soon passes out of reach of mills and tenements. The Shwé-Dagôn, earlier by twenty centuries than mills and a recent civilisation, alone stands for the receding city, a beautiful and noble object dominating the plain. And one is glad of the transition. For promising as are these husks of the new industry, prophetic even of a greatness to come, they are yet little more than the lowly material offspring of an hour. That other, piercing the grey cloud-laden skies with its circlets of gold enflamed, stands in some sort for that which is Eternal and Divine.

But soon, even this stately object is lost to view, and far as the eye can reach there stretch to the uttermost horizon the green rice-plains of Pegu, a faint undulation alone marking the subterranean prolongation of the Pegu hills. Field beyond field, and mile after mile, the richest soil in the world spreads its tapestry under the cloud-covered vault of the sky. At intervals a stream, full to the very lip, winds its way in sluggish coils to the sea; herds of red cattle stand out against the green, and half-tamed buffaloes with blue-black hides splash and welter in the submerged fields. Behind them, under a broad hat of cane, there toils the sturdy peasant, a pipe or long cheroot between his lips, splashed like his beasts with long streaks of his native earth. Rain and wet are nothing to him.

The few trees that intersperse the landscape either march with the coils of the streams and watercourses, or cluster in dense green masses about the infrequent hamlets. Each little village, on soil slightly raised above the dank level of the fields, is a conspicuous landmark. It is nearly always built along a water-channel, and the long boats of the village, drawn up along oozy banks or weed-grown backwaters, make romantic patterns upon the wide expanse. The many roofs and tapering spires of monasteries, drawn away a little apart from the noise and bustle of village life, add a note of spiritual peace to their surroundings; and the eye, wearied by the long vista of endless plain, rests with refreshment on their varied architecture and minute detail.

And thus it is that the miles are swallowed up and the minutes grow to hours as the train traverses the

country between Rangoon and Pegu. There are few incidents of greater moment than the periodical bustle of some small railway station, with its painted railings and sedate and well-trimmed hedge — a curious innovation in the landscape; or the snowy flight of a bevy of egrets in the sun. Here and there a gaunt adjutant ponders in the wet fields, a philosopher heedless of shrieking trains. On the far horizon the grey clouds shape from form to form silently climbing the dome of Heaven, or turning into purple, and hiding the green fields and the clustering homesteads behind curtains of dark, gloomy, and continuous rain.

Near Pegu the plain rises into broken hillocks covered with dense jungle, through sections of which the track cleaves a straight pathway, and with a roar and shriek the train enters the ancient city of Pegu.

II. THE STORY

"PEGU CLARISSIMA TOTIUS INDIÆ"

Pegu, long as widely known to the Western world as Ava, has fallen greatly from the splendour of its past, and it presents but a poor front to-day to the traveller familiar with its glory. Like many another city of Burma, its day is over, and it will never again dazzle the eyes or the imaginations of men. But its history remains; a fitful, intermittent, and broken tale, yet lit with many a splendid and a tragic page.

In its early beginnings it was an offshoot of Thatôn; a colony settled, like so many others that have become famous, by men for whom there was no honourable

place in their own country. These men, Thamala and Wimala, were sons of the King of Thatôn, and, since their mother was of inferior blood, they were excluded from the royal succession. They migrated in consequence, and, accompanied by a band of followers, established their new city on a site already marked out by prophecy for their occupation.

The tale is a fable, told like many others to enhance the glory of the city's origin, to connect it with the hidden workings of great causes; yet it bears testimony to the truth.

It relates how, in the eighth year after he had become enlightened, Gautama the Buddha paused in his missionary wanderings on a small hill that stands a short way to the north-east of the great pagoda. All about him, where now there spread the rice-lands and hamlets of Pegu, there rolled the untrammelled sea. Two Hamsa birds alone broke the monotony, and these creatures, conscious of the presence of One who had passed through all phases of existence, and had attained to the fulness of knowledge, came before him with joined wings and made him their obeisance. "On this spot," he foretold, "one thousand one hundred and sixteen years after my death, there will be built a city, which will become the capital of a race of monarchs." And in the fulness of time there came Thamala and Wimala to build the city of Hamsavati. The story tells us so much at least of fact, that the elevation of all this land above the sea is of comparatively recent date.

Thamala and Wimala established themselves at Hamsavati in the year 573 A.D., and for twelve years

THE PEGU PAGODA. THE WHOLE OF ITS GREAT BULK IS COVERED WITH PURE GOLD

the elder brother was king. Then his younger brother slew him, and became king in his stead; thereby inaugurating that policy of fratricide, as a proper one for kings, which, repeated again and again in the history of Burma, culminated in the massacres which made Thibaw notorious and helped to bring about the fall of Upper Burma in 1885.

The new city appears to have prospered greatly, and to have rapidly surpassed Thatôn, for we hear of Thamala founding Martaban to the south of the parent city; and there seems little doubt that for a long time after the foundation of Hamsavati the new city continued to grow in power and the old one to decline. A strange silence, however, reigns over its history throughout this period. Even the bare list of its kings ceases after the year 781 A.D., and from that date onwards to the conquest of Anawrata there is no record whatever.[1] It is conjectured that religious dissension, the struggle of Brahmanism with Buddhism, broke alike the power and the unity of the city; and it must have declined very greatly, for there is no mention of it in the History of the conquests of Anawrata. The march of the Great King, the siege and fall of Thatôn, the captivity of its Royal House and people: these are a familiar legend all over Burma even to this day; but of the taking of Pegu there is no record. It seems to have been too small, too weak, to make any resistance to the invader.

[1] There are some very remarkable stone inscriptions at Pegu, which were erected in the year 1476 A.D. They give, with positive dates, a resumé of the vicissitudes which Buddhism underwent both in Ceylon and Burma, from the Third Buddhist Council held under Asoka, to the fifteenth century A.D. They have been translated by the Burmese scholar Mr. Taw-Sein-Ko.

And here let it be understood that the war between Manuha, King of Thatôn, and Anawrata, King of Pagān, was a war between two peoples, whose origins, whose civilisation, and whose language, if cognate, were yet distinct. It was a great episode in a long conflict for racial supremacy in Burma, between the Môn and the Burmese peoples; a conflict which in its successive phases makes most of the subsequent history of Pegu, and which ended only with the complete annihilation of the Môn capital in the reign of Alompra, seven hundred years after Thatôn was ruined by his great predecessor.

For two and a quarter centuries after its conquest by Anawrata, Pegu slumbered under the yoke of Pagān. Then the gradual weakening of the Pagān dynasty allowed the subject people to raise its head once more, and the fall of Pagān before the invading hordes of Kublai Khan gave the Môn his freedom. Martaban set up for itself under Wareru, a Shan adventurer, in the year 1281, and Pegu was wrested from Burmese control. In 1323 it became again the capital of the Môn race, and twice successfully resisted the efforts of the Burmese to reconquer it. By the year 1404 the power of its kings had become consolidated, and it was able to take the offensive by invading Burmese territories and laying siege to Prome and Sagaing. Burmese and Môn were now nearly equally matched in strength, and invasion and counter-invasion followed each other without any conspicuous results, till mutual exhaustion brought temporary peace in 1620.

Intrigue and murder became rampant at the Court

of Pegu, and for several years the country was distracted by the rebellion of its princes.

In 1453, Shin Sawbu, a Môn princess who was married to the King of Ava, fled secretly from her husband's Court, and on the death of her father became Queen of Pegu. Seven years later she was succeeded by an ex-monk who, under the name of Dhamma Ceti, ruled for thirty-one years, 1460–91. The power of Burma was weakened by conflict with the Northern Shan; the new King of Pegu was a man of wise and benevolent character, opposed to an aggressive policy; and throughout his reign, and for the first time since its reconstruction as the capital of the Môn people, it knew peace. Bin-ya-Ran, his son, for thirty-five years (1491–1526) continued with one exception the tradition of peace. But the one exception was a sign of the times and the source of future disaster, for it involved an unsuccessful conflict with Taungu, now rising into power.

It is in the fifteenth century, while these events were in progress, that we get the first glimpse of Pegu from European sources.

CONTI, that pioneer of European travel in Burma, passed down to the sea-coast from Ava by way of Pegu, which, under the name Panconia, he describes as a very populous city with a circumference of twelve miles. He spent four months at Pegu, and might have left an interesting picture of the city had he himself written the narrative of his travels.

The Russian Nikitin followed him half a century later, and it cannot be said that Pegu made any lasting impression upon his mind, for he dismisses it in his

quaint narrative as "no inconsiderable Port, principally inhabited by Indian Dervishes," referring doubtless to its colony of Indian traders (A.D. 1496). Hieronymo Santo Stefano, a Genoese, made a longer stay. "Here," he says, writing of Pegu and of Bin-ya-Ran, the king, "is a great Lord, who possesses more than ten thousand elephants, and every year he breeds five hundred of them. This country is distant fifteen days' journey by land from another, called Ava, in which grow rubies and many other precious stones. Our wish was to go to this place, but at that time the two princes were at war, so that no one was allowed to go from the one place to the other. Thus we were compelled to sell the merchandise which we had in the said city of Pegu, which were of such a sort that only the Lord of the City could purchase them. To him, therefore, we sold them. The price amounted to two thousand ducats, and as we wished to be paid, we were compelled, by reason of the troubles and intrigues occasioned by the aforesaid war, to remain there a year and a half, all which time we had daily to solicit at the house of the said lord."

"While we were thus suffering from cold and from heat, with many fatigues and hardships, Messer Hieronymo Adorno, who was a man of feeble constitution, and greatly reduced by these afflictions combined with an ancient malady which tried him sorely, after fifty-five days' suffering, during which he had neither physician nor medicine, yielded up his spirit to our Lord God. This was at night, on the 27th day of December, St. John's Day, in the year 1496. His body was buried

in a certain ruined church frequented by none; and I was so grieved and afflicted by his death, that it was a great chance I had not followed him."

In the end Santo Stefano recovered himself, and his property, and departed on a fresh voyage of disaster to Malacca.

Varthema, a Bolognese traveller, says of Pegu in 1503–4, in the reign of Bin-ya-Ran:

"The city is on the mainland, and is near to the sea. On the left hand of this, that is towards the East, there is a very beautiful river by which many ships go and come. This city is walled and has good houses and Palaces built of stone with lime. The King is extremely powerful in men, both foot and horse, and has with him more than a thousand Christians. And he gives to each, for pay, six golden *pardai* per month, and his expenses."

Varthema speaks of its abundance and its trade in rubies, which came from Capelan, distant thirty days' journey.

"When we arrived in this country, the King," he says, "was fifteen days' journey distant, fighting with another who was called King of Ava."

The King returned, having gained a great victory over his enemy, and Varthema and his fellow-travellers from India were admitted to an audience.

"Do not imagine," he says, "that the King of Pegu enjoys as great a reputation as the King of Calicut, although he is so humane and domestic that an infant might speak to him, and he wears more rubies on him than the value of a very large city;

From a painting by Saya Chone

ROYAL BARGES ON THE MOAT. AN OLD-TIME PROCESSION OF THE KINGS OF BURMA

and he wears them on all his toes. And on his legs he wears certain great rings of gold, all full of the most beautiful rubies; also on his arms, and his fingers are full. His ears hang down half a palm, through the great weight of the many jewels he wears there, so that seeing the person of the King by a light at night, he shines so much that he appears to be a sun."

On their being introduced into the presence by the Nestorian Christians settled at Pegu, the King asked what people the strangers were. The Christians answered, "Sir, these are Persians."

Said the King to the interpreter (pointing to the corals they had brought), "Ask them if they are willing to sell these things."

The answer was that the articles were at the service of His Highness.

"Then the King began to say that he had been at war with the King of Ava for two years, and on that account he had no money; but that if we were willing to barter for so many rubies, he would amply satisfy us. We caused him to be told that we desired nothing further from him than his friendship—that he should take the commodities and do whatever he pleased. He, hearing this, liberally answered:

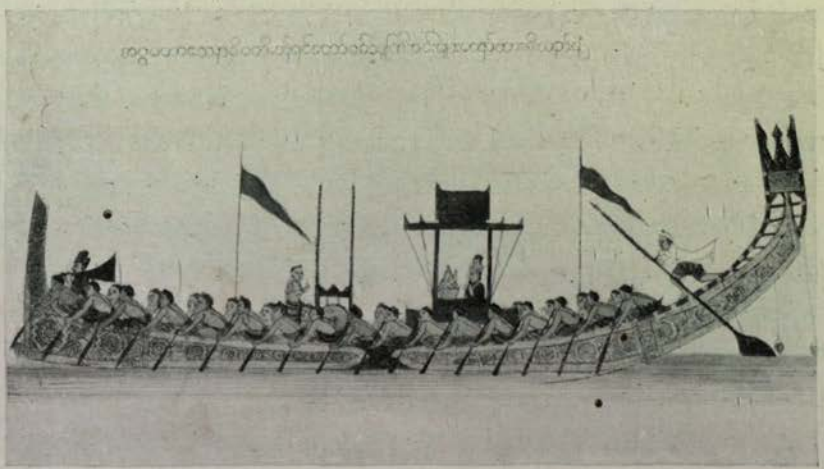
"'I know that the Persians are very liberal, but I never saw one so liberal as this man.'

"And he swore by God and by the devil that he would see which would be the more liberal, he, or a Persian. And then he desired one of his confidential servants to bring him a certain little box which was two palms in length, worked all round in gold, and was

full of rubies within and without. And when he had opened it, there were six separate divisions, all full of different rubies; and he placed it before us, telling us that we should take what we wished.

"My companion answered:

"'O Sir, you show me so much kindness, that by the faith that I bear to Mahomet, I make you a present of all these things. And know, Sir, that I do not



BURMESE MINISTER'S STATE BOAT

travel about the world to collect property, but only to see different people and different customs.'

"The King answered:

"'I cannot conquer you in liberality, but take this which I give you.' And so he took a good handful of rubies from each of the divisions of the said casket, and gave them to him. Their value was estimated at 100,000 ducats. Wherefore, by this he may be considered to be the most liberal King in the world, and

every year he has an income of about one million in gold, and he gives all his income to his soldiers."

Varthema left Pegu in 1503. Eight years later there arrived at the Court of Bin-ya-Ran, a more formidable adventurer, Ruy Nunez d'Acunha, the Ambassador of Albuquerque. The Portuguese fortunes were now in the ascendant in Asia, and Pegu was destined to make a yet closer acquaintance with that remarkable people. In 1519, and still in the reign of Bin-ya-Ran, a treaty was made with them at Martaban, and the story of it as told by Manuel Faria y Sousa, the historian of the Portuguese in Asia, is one that will bear repetition for the curious light it throws on their mutual relations.

"Now arrived," he says, "at Malacca, Anthony Correa, who came from the city Martavan, where he had been concluding a Peace with the King of Pegu; at the swearing of the Peace, assisted the King's Ministers, the priests of both nations, Catholic and Gentiles. The Heathen was called the Great Ra-lim, who after the Capitulations made in the Golden Mine, as is the custom of those people, were publickly read, began to read in a book, and then taking some yellow paper (a colour dedicated to their holy uses) with some sweet Leaves of Trees whereon were certain characters, set fire to it all, and then taking the hands of the King's Minister and holding them over the ashes, said some words which rendered the Oath inviolable. Anthony Correa, to answer this solemnity, ordered his Priest to put on a Surplice and bring his Breviary, which was so tattered and torn, that it was scandalous those Heathens

should see how little respect was paid to our sacred books. Correa observing this, ordered to be brought instead of it a book of Church-Music, which was more creditable, being bigger and better bound, and opening it, the first Verse he met was, Vanity of Vanities. This passed among the people as well as if it had been the Gospel."

Bin-ya-Ran, King of Pegu, died in 1526. His neighbour, the Chieftain of Taungu, had declared his independence of the Court of Ava forty-one years previously, and continued to rule and consolidate his power as King of Taungu for another four years after the death of Bin-ya-Ran.

The growing fortunes of Taungu were coincident with a decline in the vigour of Pegu, and the characters of the two princes who ascended the thrones of Taungu and Pegu were of a kind to hasten the inevitable end. Takara Wutbi, the successor of Bin-ya-Ran, was a lad of fifteen, of an idle and frivolous temperament. Tabeng Shwehti (otherwise known as Mengtara) was a year older, but a lad of mettle and capacity, trained in an atmosphere of ambition, and the rising hope of the Burmese race, which recognised in him a scion of the ancient line of Pagān. He was fortunate in being served by a general of great talent and fidelity; a man who was to succeed him on the throne, and become famous in history as Branginoco, King of Pegu.

Tabeng Shwehti began his career of conquest in the year 1537, by an attack on Pegu. The attack was renewed in 1538, and again in 1539; the last time with success. On each occasion the city was defended

by foreign mercenaries, Shan, Indian and Portuguese; a circumstance that bears certain testimony to its decline.

The Portuguese had indeed for some time been pressing forward in the East with a vigour and daring that has never been surpassed even in the history of our own intercourse with Asia. But forty years previously, Vasco da Gama had made his first appearance at Calicut. Within twenty years a Portuguese officer was, as we have seen, at Martaban contracting on terms of equality a treaty with the King of Pegu. And in the year 1539, that third year of Tabeng Shwehti's invasion of Pegu, there came in a great galleon, sent by the Viceroy of Goa, Ferdinand de Morales, with goods for sale and barter, and what, at the juncture he arrived, was of more importance, a backing of white men who could fight.

He had no sooner arrived at Pegu than "the King won him—with Praises and Favours—to aid him against the King of Brama, who invaded that country with such a power that the two armies consisted of two Millions of men and ten thousand Elephants. Morales went into a Galliot, and commanding the fleet of Pegu, made great havoc among the enemies' Ships. Brama came in by land like a torrent, carrying all before him, and his Fleet covering the River, though as great as Ganges. With this power he easily gained the city and Kingdom of Pegu. Ferdinand Morales met the Fleet with his, in respect of the other scarce visible, at the Point Ginamarreca, where was a furious, bloody, and desperate Fight. But the Pegus, overpowered by

From a Manuscript at the India Office

WUNGYI GOING IN STATE TO THE PAGODA

the Bramas, deserted Morales, who alone in his Galeot maintained himself against the enemies, performing Wonders with vast slaughter of them, till oppressed by the multitude he was killed. But the memory of his Bravery still lives among those people."

Tabeng Shwehti now (in 1540 A.D.) sat upon the throne of Pegu, whence, in pursuance of his great ambition, he launched army after army against the States on his borders. Martaban, after a prolonged and desperate siege, was taken in the year of his accession. Prome was taken in 1542; the Shan were defeated before the walls of Ava, and Pagān was occupied. Aracan was invaded in 1546; and Siam in 1548, but with disastrous results. The King, surfeited with war and exhausted by the strain of twenty years' ambition, turned to baser courses. Drink and self-indulgence filled up the waning years of his life. In 1550 he was assassinated by Thamein-saw-dut, a representative of the old Royal House, who had been trusted with the Governorship of the Palace.

We now come upon a period of extraordinary splendour in the history of Pegu. Bureng-Naung, brother-in-law to the late king, after a sharp conflict with the Môn, who had set up for themselves, ascended the throne, and as Branginoco, King of Pegu, became famous in the history of his country. His career is of more than passing interest, for he stands for a type of man, astonishingly strenuous and able, whom at long intervals the Burmese race, ease-loving and careless though it be, is able to produce.

Bureng-Naung reigned for thirty years, and the

history of his reign is one of almost incessant war. His conquests were immense, and his Empire attained to proportions that have never been surpassed in the history of Burma. "Branginoco," we are told, "so far enlarged His Empire by his conquests, that it extended to China and Tartary, and was Sovereign of twenty-four Great Kingdoms beside eighty Princes not inferior to Kings. Thus it became the powerfullest Monarchy in Asia except that of China."

Martaban, Pegu, Taungu, Prome, Ava, Zimmé, the Shan States, Laos, and Siam were included within its borders. The capital of this Empire was established at Pegu, and the King devoted such leisure as he could borrow from his wars, to lifting it to splendour and beauty. It is easy to picture what it looked like in his day, for the city was visited by many travellers, more than one of whom has left his impressions on record.

The first and most notable of these was Cæsar Frederick, a merchant traveller from Venice. The account he has left cannot be surpassed at this late hour in the history of Burma; to paraphrase it would be but to lessen its reality and its charm, and it is best given in his own words, as translated by an Englishman who was his contemporary in thought and feeling.

PEGU UNDER BRANGINOCO

1567 A.D.

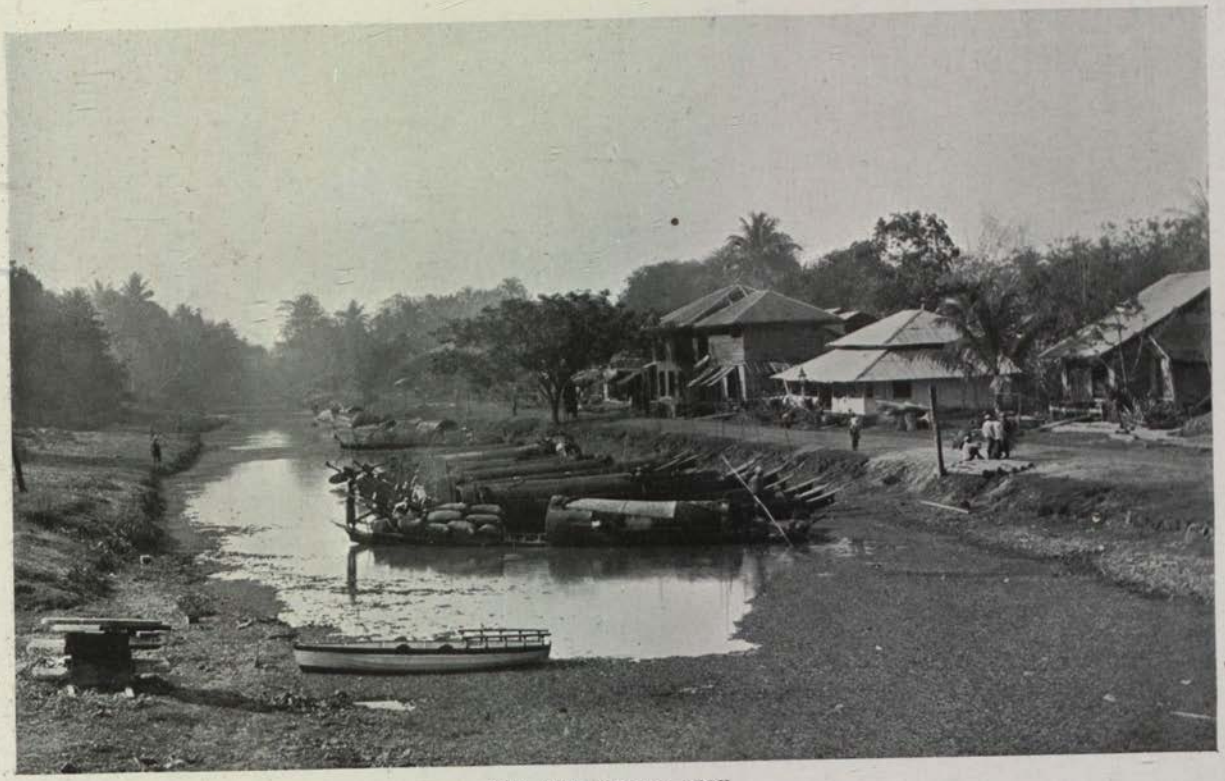
"By the help of God," says Frederick, "we cam safe to Pegu, which are two cities, the old and the

newe; in the old Citie are the Merchant strangers and Merchants of the Countrie, for there is the greatest doings and the greatest trade. This Citie is not Verie Great, but it hath very Great Suburbs.

"In the new Citie is the pallace of the King, and his abiding place with all his Barons and Nobles, and other gentlemen. And in ye time that I was there, they finished the building of the new citie. It is a great citie, Verie plain and flat, and 4-square, walled round about, and with ditches y^{t} compasse the wals about with water, in which diches are many crockadels; it hath no drawe Bridges, yet it hath twentie Gates, five for everie square on ye walls. Ther is manie places made for centinels to watch, made of Wood and covered of Guilt with Gold. The streets thereof are the fayrest that I have seen, they are as streight as a lyne from one gate to another, and standing at the one gate, you may discover to the other; and they are as broad as 10 or 12 men may ride a-brest in them, and those streetes that be thwart are fayre and large. These streets, both on the one side and on the other, are planted at the dores of the houses: Nut trees of India which make a verie commodious shadowe. The houses be made of Wood and covered with a kind of tiles in forme of cups, verie necessarie for their use."

THE PALACE OF THE KING

"The King's Palace is in the middle of the Citie, made in form of a walled Castle, with ditches full of water round about it. The Lodgings within are made of Wood, all over Gilded with fine pynacles, and verie



THE MOAT OF OLD PEGU

costly worke, covered with plates of Golde. Truly it may be a King's house."

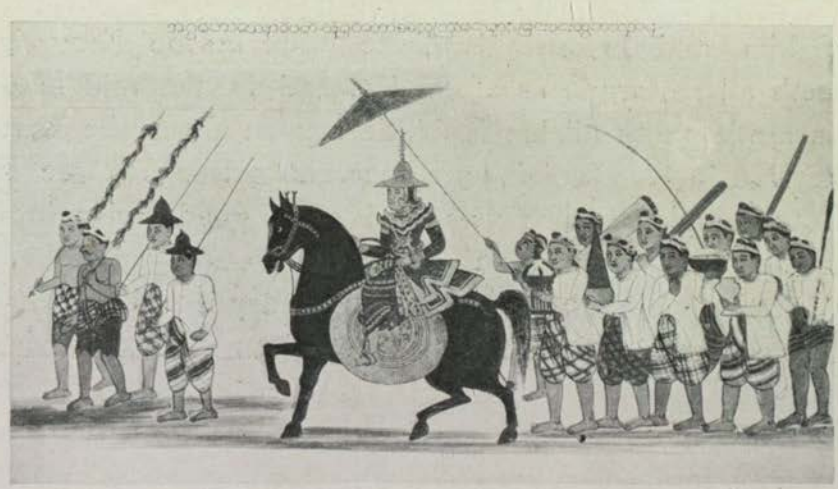
"He built a Palace," says Sousa, "as a City. The least part of its beauty was rich Painting and Gilding; for the roofs of some Apartments were covered with Plates of solid Gold. Some rooms were set with Statues of Kings and Queens of massy Gold set with rich Stones as big as the Life."

A MINISTER OF STATE

THE KING'S JUSTICE

"The King sitteth everie day in person to heare the suites of his Combacts, but he nor they never speake one to another, but by supplication made in this order. The King sitteth aloft up in a great hall, on a tribunale seate, and lower under him sitteth all his Barons rounde about, then those that demande audience, enter into a Great Court before the King, and there Set them downe on the Grounde, forty paces distant from the King's person; and amongst those people there is no difference in matters of audience before the King, but all alike, and there they sit with their supplications

in their handes which are made of longe leaves of a tree. These leaves are three quarters of a yarde longe, and two fingers broade which are written with a sharpe yron made for that purpose, and in those leaves are their supplications written, and with their supplications they have in their handes a present or Gift, according to the Waightinesse of their matter. Then come the Secretaries down and reade their supplications, and then



A ROYAL OFFICER

take them after they are reade before the King, and if the King thinke it good to doe to them that favour or justice that they demand, then hee Commandeth to take the present out of his hand, but and if he thinke their demaunde bee not justly, or according to right: hee commandeth them away without takeing of their giftes or presents."

THE GREAT POMP OF THE KING

"I say that this King everie yeere in his feastes triumpheth, and because it is worthy of the noting, I

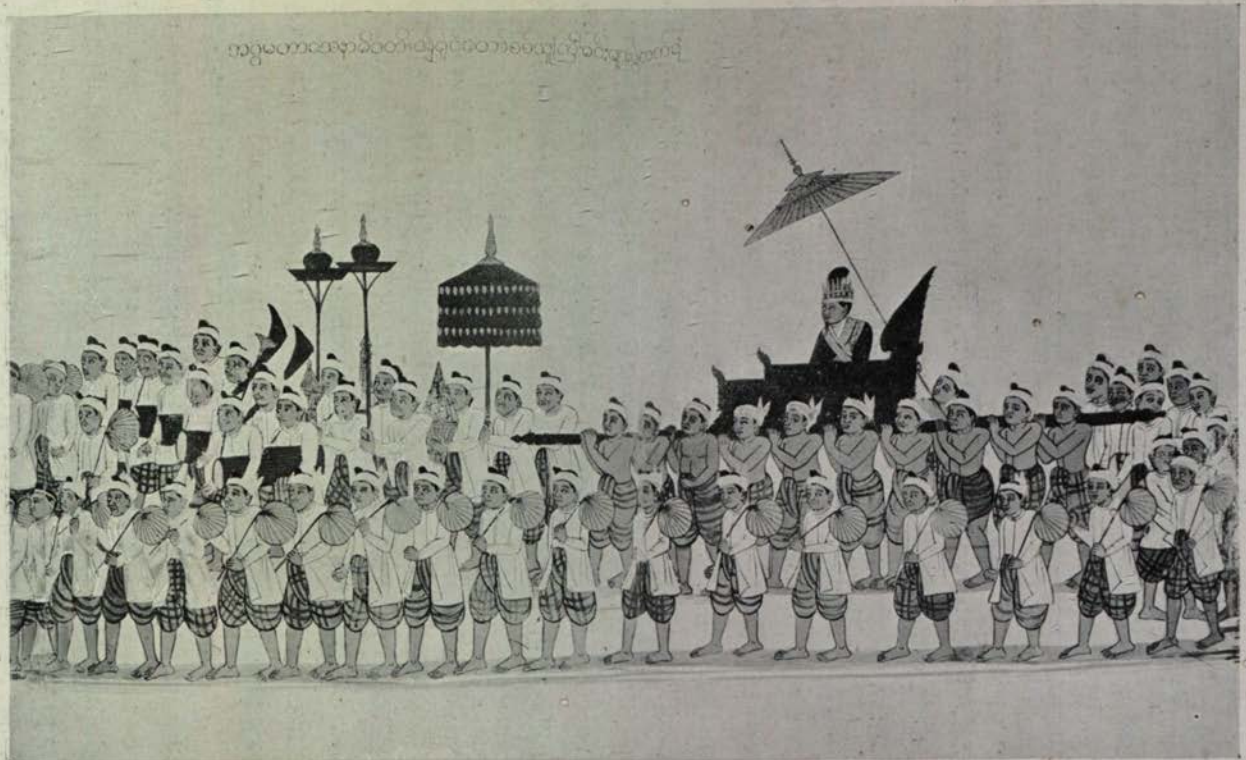
think it meet to writ thereof, which is as followeth. The King rideth on a triumphing Cart or Wagon, all Guilded, which is drawn by sixteen goodly horses: and their cart is verie high with a goodly Canopie over it; behind the Cart goeth twenty of his Lordes and Nobles with everie one a rope in his hand fast to the Cart, for to hold it upright, that it fal not. The King sitteth in the middle of the Cart, and upon the same Carte, about the King standeth fowre of his Nobles most favoured of him, and before this Carte wherein the King is, goeth all his armie as aforesaide, and in the middle of his armie goeth all his Nobilitie rounde about the Cart, that are in his dominions, a marvellous thing to see so many people, such riches and such good order in a people so barberous as they bee."

And of Branginoco's triumphal entry into Pegu after the conquest of Siam, Sousa gives the following account:

"Braginoco returning victorious to Pegu, entered the city in triumph, many waggons going before, loaded with idols and inestimable booty. He came at last in a chariot with the conquered Queens loaden with jewels at his feet, and drawn by the Captive Princes and Lords; before him marched two thousand elephants richly adorned, and after him his Victorious Troops. The Reverence paid him was more like a God than a Prince."

THE ARMIES OF THE KING

"They have," writes Frederick, "a verie excellent order in their battell as I have seene at their feasts which they make in the yeere, in which feasts the King



From a Manuscript at the India Office

A BURMESE MINISTER BEING CARRIED IN STATE

maketh triumphs, which is a rare thing and worthie memorie, that in so barbarous a people there should bee such goodly orders as they have in their armies which be distinct in squares of Eliphantes, of Horsemen, of Harquebushers and Pikemen, that truly the number of them are infinite: but their armour and Weapons are verie naught and weake as well the one as the other, they have very bad Pikes, their swords are worse made, like long Knives without pointes, his harquebushes are moste excellent, and alway in his warres hee hath eightie thousand harquebushes, and the number of them encreaseth dayly. Because the King will have them shoote everie day at the Plancke and so by continuall exercise they become most excellent Shotte: also hee hath Great ordinance made of very Good mettall. To conclude, there is not a King on the Earth that hath more power or strength than this King of Pegu, because he hath twenty and five crowned Kings at his command. He can make in his Campe: a million and a halfe of men of warre in the fielde against his enemies, the state of his Kingdome and maintenance of his armie which is a thing incredible to consider the victualles that should maintaine such a number of people in the Warres, but hee that knoweth the nature and qualitie of that people, will easily believe it. I have seene with my proper eyes that those people and soldiers have eaten of all sorts of wilde beasts, that are on the earth, whether it be verie filthie or otherwise, all serveth for their mouths, yea, I have seen them eat scorpions and serpents, also they feede of all kinde of herbes and grasse. So that if such a Great armie want

not Water and salt, they will maintain themselves a long time in a bush with rootes, flowers and leaves of trees, they carrie rice with them for their voyage, that serveth them instead of comfetts: It is so daintie unto them. This King of Pegu hath not any army or power by sea, but in the land, for people, dominions, Gold and silver, hee farre exceedth the power of the Great Turke in treasure and power."

THE KING'S WEALTH

"This King hath divers Magazens full with treasure, as Golde, silver, and everie day he encreaseth it more and more, and it is never deminished, also he is Lorde of the Mines of Rubyes, safyrs, and spineles. Neere unto his royal pallace, there is an estimable treasure whereof he maketh no account, for that it standeth in such a place that everie one may see it, and the place where this treasure is: a great Court walled rounde about with walls of stone, with two gates which stande open everie daye, and within this place or Courte, are gilded houses covered with lead, and in everie one of these are certain Pagods or idoles of a verie great valure."

THE KING'S ELEPHANTS

"Within ye gate of the Palace there is a fayre large Court from the one side to the other, wherein there is made places for the strongest and stoutest Elephantes appointed for the service of the King's person: and amongst all other elephants, he hath foure that be white,

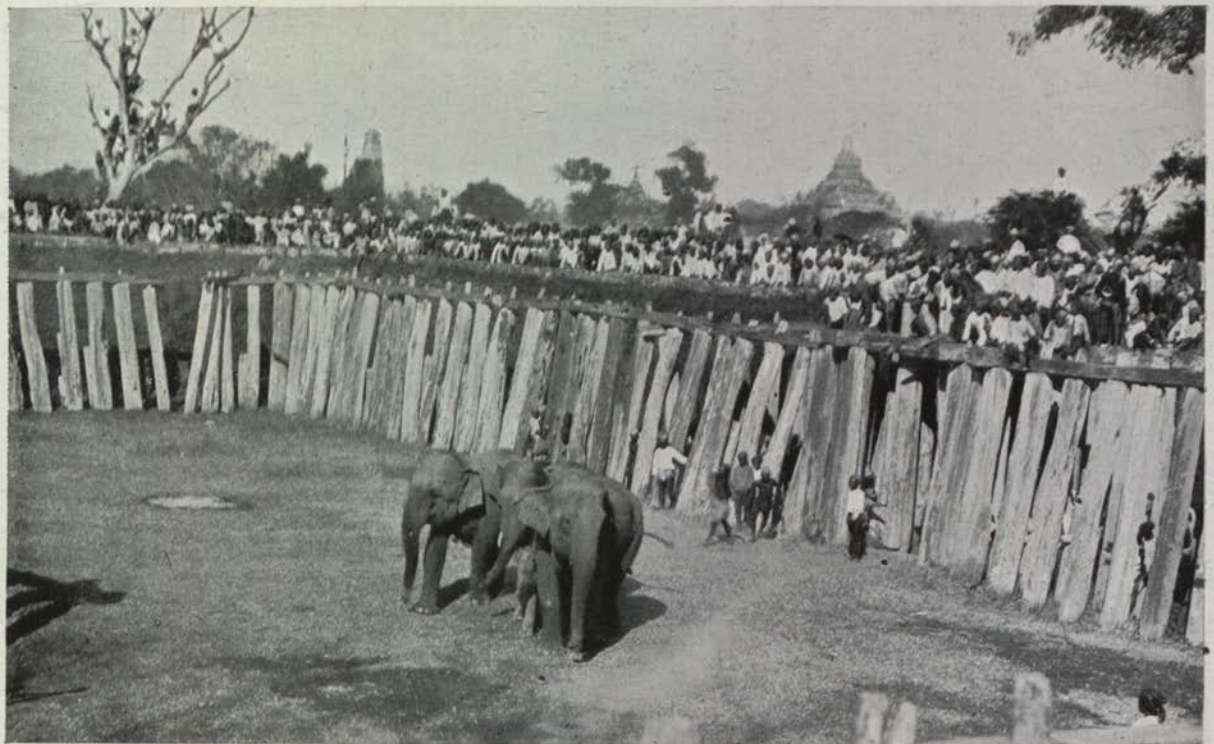
a thing so rare that a man shall hardly finde another King that hath any, and if this King know any other that hath white eliphants, he sendeth for them as for a gift.

"The time that I was there, there was two brought out of a farre country, and that lost mee something the sight of them, for that they Command the Merchantes to goe to see them and then they must give somewhat to the men that bring them.

"This King amongst all others his titles, hee is called the King of the White Eliphants, and it is reported that if this King knew any other King that had any of these white Eliphants and would not send them unto him, that he would hazarde his whole Kingdom to conquer them. He esteemeth these white Eliphants verie deerly, and are had in great regard, and kept with verie meete Service; everie one of them is in a house, all guilded over, and they have their meate given them in vessels of silver and gold. There is one black Eliphant the Greatest that hath been seen, and he is kept according to his bignesse, hee is nine cubites high which is a mervellous thing.

"It is reported that this King hath foure thousand Eliphants of Warre, and all have their teeth, and they use to put on their two upper teeth sharpe spikes of yron, and make them fast with rings, because these beasts fight, and make battel with their teeth.

"And also this King hath a brave device in hunting to take these Eliphants when they will, two miles from the Citie. He hath builded a fayre pallice and al guilded and within it a fayre Court, and within it and



HOW ELEPHANTS WERE CAUGHT

rounde about there is made an infinite number of places for men to stand to see this hunting : neere unto this Pallace is a mightie great Wood, through the which the Huntsmen of the King ride continually on the backs of the femine Eliphants, teaching them in this business . . . and when the wilde Eliphant doth smell thereunto, they follow the femines and cannot leave them when the huntsmen have made provision, and the Eliphant so entangled : they guide the Femines towards the Palace which is called Lambell, and this palace hath a door which doth open and shut with ingines, before which doore there is a streight way with trees on both the sides, which covereth the waye in such wise as it is like darknesse in a corner, the wilde Eliphant when he commeth to this waye, thinketh that he is in the Woods. At the end of this darke way there is a great field : when the hunters have gotte this pray, when they first came to this fielde, they sende presently to give Knowledge there to the Citie and with all speede there goeth out fiftie or sixtie men on horseback, and do beset the field rounde about. In the great fielde then the females, which are taught in this business goe directly to the mouth of the dark way, and whereas the Eliphant is entered in there, the hunters shoute and make a great noise, as much as is possible to make, ye wilde Eliphant entering in at the Gate of ye pallace, which is then open, and as soone as they bee in, the gate is shut without any noise, and so the hunters with the female Eliphants, and the wilde one are all in the Court together, and then within a small time the Females withdraw them-

selves away one by one, out of the Court, leaving the wild Eliphant alone, and when hee perceiveth that hee is left alone, hee is so madde that for two or three hours to see him, it is the Greatest pleasure in the worlde, hee weepeth, hee flingeth, hee runneth, hee justleth, hee thrusteth under the places where the people stande to see him, thinking to kill some of them, but the posts and timber is so strong and great, that they cannot hurt anybodie, yet hee oftentimes breaketh his teeth in the Grates. At length when he is wearie and hath laboured his body that he is all wet with sweat, then he plucketh in his trunke into his mouth and then hee throweth out so much water out of his bellie that he sprinkleth it over the heads of the lookers on, to the uttermoste of them, although it be verie high, and then when they see him verie wearie, there goeth certain officers into the Court with long sharpe canes in their hands and pricke him that they make him to goe into one of the houses that is made alongest the Court for the same purpose, as there is many which is made long and narrowe, that when the Eliphant is in, he cannot turne himselfe to goe backe againe. . . . At length when they have gotten him into one of those houses, they stande over him in a loft and get ropes under his belly and about his necke, and about his legges, and binde him fast and so let him stande foure or five days and give him neither meate nor drinke. At the end of these foure or five dayes, they unloose him and give him meate and drinke, and in eight dayes he is become tame."

FREDERICK ON BURMESE APPAREL

"In Pegu, the fashion of their apparell is all one, as well the noble man, as the Simple: the only difference is the fineness of the cloth, which is cloth of Bombast one finer than another, and they weare their apparell in this Wise: first a white bombast cloth which serveth for a shirt, then they gird another painted bombaste cloth of forteen brasses which they bind up betwixt their legges, and on their heades they weare a small stock of three braces, made in guize of a myter, ... they goe all barefooted but the noble men never goe on foote, but are carried by men in a seat, with great reputation, with a hat made of the leaves of a tree to keepe him from the raine and Sunne, or otherwise they ride on horseback with their feet bare in the stayrops.

"Also the women goe barefooted, their arms laden with hoopes of Golde and jewels, and their fingers full of pretious rings with their haire rolled up about their heads."

PAGODAS

"They consume about their Verely or Idoll houses Great store of leafe Golde, for that they overlay al the toppes of the houses with Gold, and some of them is covered with Golde from the toppe to the foote. In covering whereof there is Great store of Gold spent, for that everie ten yeares they new overlay them with Gold, for every ten years the raine doth consume the Golde from these houses. And by this means

they make Gold dearer in Pegu then it would bee, if they consumed not so much in this vanitie."

THE TRADE OF PEGU

"In the Indies there is not any merchandise that is Good to bring to Pegu, unless it bee at some times by chance to bring at some times Opium of Cambaia, and if he bring monie he shall lose by it.

"Now the commodities that come from S. Tome, are the only merchandice for that place, which is the great quantity of cloth made there, which they use in Pegu: which cloth is made of bombast woven and painted so that the more that kind of cloth is washed, the more livelier they shewe their colours, so that a small bale of it, will cost a thousande or two thousande Duckets. Also from S. Tome they layde Great store of red yarne, of Bombast with a root which they call Saia, as aforesaid, which colour will never out. With which merchandise everie yere there goeth a great Ship from S. Tome to Pegu of great importance, and they usually depart from S. Tome to Pegu the 10 or 11 of September.

"Also ther Goeth another Great Ship from Bengala, every yere laden with fine cloth of bombast of all Sorts which arriveth in the harbour of Pegu. This harbour is called Cosmin.

"From Malaca to Martavan, there cometh many small ships and great, laden with peper, Sadolo, Procellam of China, Camfora, Bruneo, and other merchandice.

"The ships that come from Meca, enter into the port of Pagu and Cirion, and those ships bring cloth

of Wool, Scarlets, Velvets, Opium and Chickens (The Chickenes are peeces of gold worth sterling 7 shillinges) by which they lose, and they bring them because they have no other thing that is good for Pegu: but they esteeme not the losse of them, for that they make such great gaine of their commodities that they carrie from thence out of that Kingdome."

THE WAY OF TRADE IN PEGU

"They that goe to Pegu to buy jewels, and if hee will doe well: it behoveth him to bee a whole yeere there to doe his businesse, if he will doe it well. For if so bee that hee would returne with the Ship he Came in, he Cannot doe anie thing well, for the brevity of the time, because that when they custome their Goods in Pegu that come from S. Tome in their Shippes: it is as it were about the Nativitie, and when they have customed their Goodes, then they must sell it for credite, for a moneth or two: and then at the beginning of March the Shippes depart.

"The Merchants that come from S. Tome, take for the paiment of their Goods, Gold and silver, which is never wanting there. And eight or ten daies before their departure, they are all satisfied: also they may have Rubies in paiment, but they make no account of them."

TRADE IN RUBIES

August 1569

"Also it is a thing to be noted in the buying of Jewels in Pegu, for he that hath no knowledge shall

have as good Jewels, and as good cheap as he that hath been practised there a long time, which is a Good order, which is this. There is in Pegu foure men of Good reputation which are called Tareghe, or brokers of Jewels. These four men have all the Jewels, or Rubies in their hands, and the Merchant that will buy, commeth to one of these Tareghe and telleth him, that he hath so much money to imploy in Rubies. For through the hands of these foure men passeth all the Rubies: for they have such quantity that they knowe not what to doe with them, but sell them at a most vile and base price. When the Merchant hath broke his minde to one of these Brokers or Tareghe, they carie him to one of their Shoppes, although he have no knowledge in jewels: and when the Jewellers perceive that hee will employ a Good rounde summe, they will make bargaine, and if not, they let him alone.

"The use generally of this Citie, is this: y^{t} when any Merchant hath bought any great quantity of Rubies, and have agreed for them, the Merchant carrieth them home to his house, let them bee of what valure they will he shall have space to looke on them and relooke them two or three dayes: and if hee have no knowledge in them he shall always have many Merchants in that city that hath verie Good Knowledge in Jewels: with whome hee may alwayes conferre and take counsell, and shewe them unto whom hee will, and if he finde that hee hath not employed his money well, he may returne his Jewelles backe to them whom hee had them of, without any losse at all.

"Which, thing is such a shame to the Tareghe to

have his Jewels returne, that he had rather to beare a blowe on the face then that it should be thought that he should sell them so deere to have them returned. For these men have always great care that they make good employmentes, especially to those that have no knowledge. This they doe because they woulde not loose their credite: and when those Merchantes that have knowledge in Jewelles buy any, if they buy them deere it is there owne faults and not the Brokers: yet it is good to have knowledge in Jewelles, by reason that he may somewhat ease the price.

"There is also a verie good order for which they have in buying of Jewelles: which is this, there is many merchants that standeth by at the making of the bargaine, and because they shall not understande howe the jewelles be solde: The Broker and the Merchants have their handes under a cloth, and by touching of fingers and nipping the joynts they knowe what is done, what is bidden and what is asked. So that the standers by know not what is demanded for them, although it be for a thousand or ten thousand Duckets. For everie joynt and everie finger hath his signification. For if the Merchants that stand by, should understand the bargain, it would breed a great controversie amongst them."

THE MONEY OF PEGU

"The corant mony that is in this citie, and throughout all this Kingdome is called Gansa or Ganza which is made of Copper and Leade: It is not the monie of the King,

but everie man may stampe it that will, because it hath his juste partition or valure: but they make many of them false by putting overmuch leade into them.

"When any man will receive money or make paiment, hee must take a publique wayer of money, a day or two before hee goe about his businesse, and give him in payment for his labour, two Byza a moneth, and for this hee is bounde to make Good all your money heerby: and to maintain it for Good for that hee receiveth it and seales the bagges with his Seale.

"That money is verie waightie, for forty Byza is a great Porters burthen, and commonly a Byza of a Ganza is worth (after our account) halfe a ducket, little more or lesse."

EXACTIONS

"The custom of Pegu and fraight thether may amount unto twentie or twenty-two per cent, and 23 according as he hath more or less stolen from him, that day they custome the Goods. It is requisite that a man have his eyes watchfull, and to be carefull, and to have manie friendes, for when they custome in the Great hall of the King, there commeth manie Gentlemen accompanied with a number of their slaves and these Gentlemen have no shame that their slaves rob strangers: whether it be cloth in the wing of it or any other thing: they laugh at it. And although you have set so manie eyes to looke there for your benefite, that you escape unrobbed of the slaves, a man cannot choose but that he must be robbed of the officers of the Custome house."

PEGU IN THE REIGN OF NANDA BURENG

A.D. 1581-99

In 1581 Bureng-Naung died on his way to the conquest of Aracan. He had lifted his Empire to a pitch of extraordinary splendour, but the price he had paid in blood and energy was too great a one for his country. Thirty years of furious activity had left their mark upon a people never very numerous, and by temperament capable only of spasmodic effort.

The only hope for Pegu lay in peace, the long peace of a generation. But peace was of all things the last that his successor could hope for. The swiftly conquered peoples were only waiting to rise again, and the subject kings to throw off their allegiance.

Within two years there occurred at Pegu an event which augured but ill for the prosperity of the new King's reign. The King of Ava attempted to throw off the suzerainty of Pegu; a number of the Peguan officers were found guilty of complicity with Ava; and to suppress such efforts the King ordered them all to be burnt to death, together with their wives and children.

Some years previously and under similar circumstances, the King's father, the great Bureng-Naung, had ordained a similar punishment, but he was strong enough to be persuaded to clemency. His son combined smaller talents with greater ferocity.

There was present at this time in Pegu a jeweller of Venice named Gasparo Balbi, and to Balbi we are indebted for an account of this tragic event.

THE HOLOCAUST OF PEGU

"The King of Pegu proclaimed warre against Ava, and called to him his Bagnia and Semini, and gave order to his Decagini, that as they came he should put them in prison; which being performed by the Decagini the King ordained that the morning following they should make an eminent and spacious Scaffold, and cause all the Grandes to come upon it, and then set fire to it, and burne them all alive. But to shew that he did this with justice, he sent another mandate, that he should doe nothing till he had an Olla or Letter written with his hand in letters of Gold, and in the meantime he commanded him to retaine all prisoners of the Grandes families unto the women great with child, and those which were in their swaddling clothes, and so he brought them all together upon the said Scaffold and the King sent the Letter that he should burne them. And the Dacagini performed it, and burned them all, so that there was heard nothing but weepings, shrikings, cryings, and sobbings: for there were foure thousand in this number which were so burned, great and small, for which execution were publike Guards placed by the King, and all of the old and new Citie were forced to assist them. I also went thither and saw it with Great Compassion and griefe that the little children without any fault should suffer such martyrdome, and among others there was one of his Chiefe Secretaries, who was last put in to be burned, yet was freed by the King's order; but his legge was begunne to be burnt, so that he was lame."

AN AUDIENCE OF THE KING.

About this time Balbi had audience of the King.

"After that I was provided," he writes, "of a good Dongerman and Interpreter, the noise of Trumpets was heard, which signified we should see the King and have audience of him. Wee entered within the Second Gate whereby they goe into the Court-yard, and the interpreter and I cast ourselves upon our Knees on the ground, and with our hands elevated in humble wise, and making a shew three times, before we rose, of Kissing the Ground; and three other times we did thus before wee came neere to the place where the King sate with his Semini; prostrate on the earth I heard all his Speach, but understood it not. I gave the Emeralds to the Interpreter, who lifted them up over his head, and again made reverence of them called Rom bee: and as soon as the King saw it, a Maigiran, that is to say, the Lord of his Words, tooke the Emeralds, and gave them into the King's hand, who a little while after called him, commanding him as Lord of his Words that he should ask me what countriman I was, how many yeeres it was since I left my countrie, and what was my name, and from what place I had brought those Emeralds, and I answered that my name was Gasparo Balbi, that I had brought the Emeralds from Venice to give to his Majestie, the fame of whose bountie, courtesie and greatness was spread over the world; all this was written in their letters, and read by the Lord of his Words to his Majestie.

"He commanded to ask me in what parts Venice was

seated and what King governed it; and I told him that it was in the Kingdom of Italie and that it was a Republike or Free State, not governed by any King. When the King heard this, he greatly wondered; so that he began to laugh so exceedingly, that hee was overcome of the cough which made him that hee could hardly speake to his great men. Lastly he demanded, if that King which last took Portigall were as great, and if Venice were warlike. To which I answered that King Philip that had taken Portugall was the potentest King among the Christians, and that the Venetians were in league with him but had no fear of any, yet sought friendship with all. And then I reported the overthrow which the Venetians gave the Emperor of the Turkes. Ametbi who at that time was at Mecca confirmed this to be true of the defeat of the Turkish Armado. Then he gave me a Cup of Gold and five pieces of China Damaske of Diverse colours, and bad them tell me that he gave me these and did not so pay me for my Emeralds for which I should be contented of his publicke Terreca, which are his treasurers. Moreover, the King ordered that for the wares which I had brought, the Decacini should not make me pay any taxe or Custome."

A REIGN OF TERROR

"On a sudden and within a few days, he gathered together out of both the Cities more than 300,000 persons, and encamped without the Citie. Ten days after that I, Balbi, saw the King upon an Elephant all

over covered with Gold and Jewels, goe to the Warre with Great Courage, with a Sword after our Custome, Sent him by the Vice-roy of Goa, the hilt whereof was gilded."

The Kings of Ava and Pegu met in battle on the field of Panwa. After a desperate duel, in which the King of Pegu had an elephant killed under him, victory declared in his favour. A period of terrible strain now set in for the kingdom and the people of Pegu. Army after army was hastily levied and launched against Siam, now in full revolt. Tens of thousands of the King's troops died on the way, of disease and want; the very life-blood of the country was ebbing away. In 1593 the Crown Prince, described by Balbi as "a man of great stature very courteous and pleasant, and delighting in discharging Harquebusses and shooting in Bowes," was killed in battle against Siam. The death of his son drove Nanda Bureng to insane extremities.

"Enraged and resolved to revenge," writes the Jesuit Pimenta, "hee made great preparations three yeeres together, and then thought to carry with him all the Peguains to the warre. But of them, presenting the former dreadful slaughters and losses to their minds, some became Talapoies (Friers), others hid themselves in Deserts and Woods, and many sold themselves for Slaves. The King caused Ximibogo his Uncle to search publick records, and to press one halfe to the Warres, he also proclaimed that all which in such a space had turned Talapoies should return secular; the young should be compelled to the warres, the old to be exiled

into the region of the Bramas, whom also he after changed away for Horses. He ordained also that all the Peguans should be branded in the right hand, that every man's name, countrie and condition might be known."

To such a policy there could be only one conclusion. The tributary Kings of Prome, Taungu and Zimme broke into open revolt. The King of Aracan despatched a fleet and an army for the conquest of Pegu. The city was invested, and after a brief siege opened its gates to the conquerors. The King was sent prisoner to Taungu, and was shortly after put to death. Pegu, the splendid, the opulent, the wonderful city of Bureng-Naung, was reduced to desolation; and famine and horror stalked the land. Of the terrible pass to which it was brought at this period there is ample testimony in the narratives of contemporary travellers and historians.

Nicholas Pimenta, Visitor General of the Jesuits in India, gives of these events the following account. Referring to the King's first struggles with his rebellious subjects, he says:

"The Cosmians first set a King over them, against whom the King sent an Armie, which spoiled all the Countrie, and brought many Captives, whom the King caused to be burned: and continuing his warre upon them, faced by famine, they yeelded to his mercy, but he with exquisite torments slew them all."

AVA

"The next stage of his furie was the Kingdom of Ava, where he commanded his sonne the Governour

to bring them all into the Kingdom of Pegu, now so destitute of inhabitants; but the aire not agreeing, they brake out in pushes and diseases, which also infected the Natives, that some with impatience of the torture threw themselves into the river."

PEGU BESIEGED

"In these broiles the Siamite taketh opportunity, and marcheth against Pegu in harvest time, some of their fruits were hastily inned, the rest burned by the King's command. The Siamite layeth siege to Pegu, in which were then numbered an hundred and fifty thousand Peguans, Bramans, and of other nations; three thousand peeces of ordnance; one thousand of them brasse. The siege continued from Januarie to April 1569. By the helpe of some Portugues and Turkes, the Citie escaped, and the rumour of Portugues coming by way of Camboia raised the siege. But famine succeeded with a worse siege, which made the forren souldiers leave the Citie."

The King of Taungu refusing to send men or food to Pegu:

"The famine encreased in the Citie, insomuch that they killed and did eate each other. The King caused the people to be numbered, and there finding seven thousand Siamites, caused them all to be slaine, and divided the Provision to the rest, of which there were not of all ages and sexes about thirty thousand remayning."

Prome was at this time in scarcely better case. "The

Grandees, of whom every weeke almost yeelded a rising Sunne setting in a bloody cloude," disputed with each other sovereignty, until at last the city was deserted and "left to the habitation of wilde beasts."

In spite of the widespread tribulation of his people the King jealously guarded his own riches. "The King," says Pimenta, "is said to have killed two hundred eunuches lest they should betray his huge treasuries: it is also reported, that his father caused three hundred and sixty-five cornbalengas of Gold (great kinde of gourd) which none knoweth where they be." Of

THE KING'S END

he says, "Boves writeth 28th March 1600 that the King of Pegu beleagred with a straight siege by the Kings of Taungu and Arracan, delivered himselfe, unable to hold out any longer to the King of Taungu, which caused his head and the Queen's also to be cut off. The like he did to his sonne the Prince. After this he went to the tower where the King's treasure was kept, which was so much that scarcely six hundred Elephants and as many Horses were sufficient to carrie away the Gold and Gemmes only. For I say nothing of the Silver and other metals, as things of no price."

"The King of Arracan," says Sousa, "contenting himself with what he of Taungu under-valued, gathered above three Millions and a great Train of large Cannon."

Peter Williamson Floris, who visited Pegu shortly after its fall, confirms these stories of the King's wealth and of his tragic end.

"The King of Pegu," he says, "because of the great dearth and death, gave over himselfe, and all his treasure into the hands of the King of Taungu; to prevent also falling into the hands of the King of Arracan coming against him with a mightie power.

"This King of Arracan easily made himself master of the Towne and Country almost emptie and famished. Thinking to goe into Taungu: that King sent Embassadors offering to deliver unto him certaine portions of the treasures of Pegu, the White Elephant and the King's daughter (both which I have seen in Arracan Anno 1608) as also the King of Pegu, or else to kill him (as afterwards it happened that the King of Taungu slew him with a pilon, wherewith they stamp their Rice, as being free against any stabbing). In this manner came this mightie Empire to ruine, so that at this day there is no remembrance of it."

"I went thither," says Boves, "with Philip Brito, and in fifteene dayes arrived at Sirian, the Chiefe porte in Pegu. It is a lamentable spectacle to see the bankes of the Rivers set with infinite fruit-bearing trees, now overwhelmed with ruines of gilded Temples, and noble edifices; the wayes and fields full of skulls and bones of wretched Pagans, killed or famished and cast into the River, in such numbers that the multitude of Carkasses prohibiteth the way and passage of any ship; to omit the burnings and massacres committed by this the cruellest of tyrants that ever breathed."

"For in late times," says Pimenta, "they were brought to such miserie and want, that they did eat man's flesh and kept publike shambles thereof. Parents

abstained not from their children, and children devoured their parents. The stronger by force preyed on the weaker, and if any were but skinne and bone, yet did they open their intrailes to fill their owne, and picked out their braines. The women went about the streets with knives to like butcherly purposes."

THE END

Thus was the glory of Pegu extinguished, and it might well have been that the last chapter in its history had been written. Yet it was destined to play a part again in the history of Burma; once more the old struggle between the Môn and the Burmese people was to be revived, and once more annihilation was to overtake the devoted city, consecrated by prophecy to a happier fortune.

Its history in the interval may be briefly told.

For a few years it seemed as though it must become an appanage of Portugal. In 1603 Philip de Brito y Nicote, that strange comet of adventure, was proclaimed King of Pegu. In 1613 he was impaled outside the walls of Siriam, and the Portuguese ceased for ever to be of any account in Burma.

For a few years its new master, the King of Ava, ruled his Empire from Pegu; but the city was in ruins, and he grew tired of living amidst the symbols of decay. In 1634 the capital was definitely transferred to Ava. Pegu now lapsed into a subordinate province. It no longer had a king of its own. It was ruled by a succession of Governors, who were cordially hated by its

people. For a hundred years it had no history. But gradually its population came back to it. Its national spirit awoke. In 1740 it broke into open revolt, and set up a king for itself.

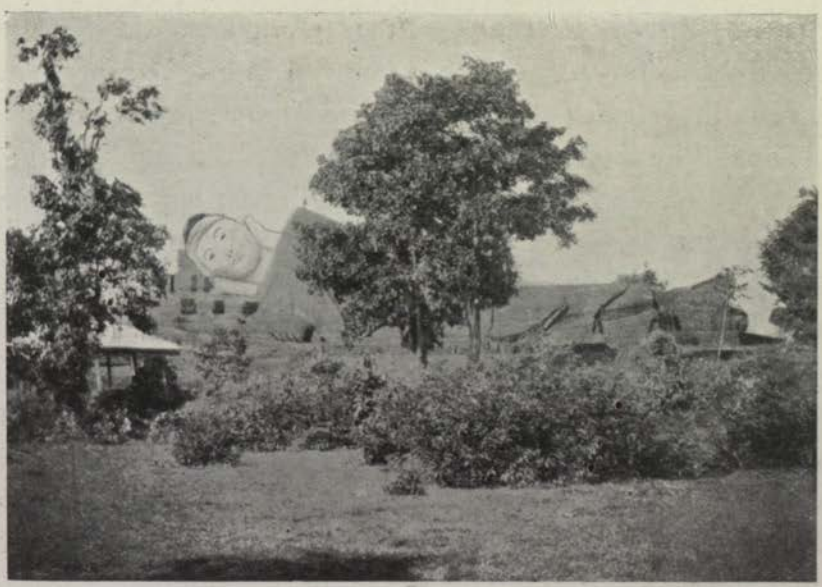
This man, a Gwe Shan by race, is a singular and mysterious figure in Burmese history. A monk by training, a prince it is supposed by birth, he succeeded in securing the devotion of the Môn people. Then, when all was seemingly well with him, "he suddenly left his capital, attended by ten leading nobles, with an escort of two hundred men, and proceeded to the town of Sittang, ostensibly to hunt elephants in the neighbouring forests. Shortly after, he sent for the Queen and her attendants, and announced to the Talaing nobles that he had determined to retire from the kingdom.

"The only explanation of this conduct is given in the Talaing chronicles. It is there stated that the Gwe King was proficient in astrology; that casting his own horoscope, the result portended disaster; and that in a self-sacrificing spirit he resigned the throne, hoping that the destiny of the Talaing people might be linked with one whose good fortune was assured." [1]

He was succeeded in 1746 A.D. by Binya Dala, one of the ten noblemen who had accompanied him to Sittang. Under Binya Dala a strenuous effort was made by the Môn people to recover their ancient ascendency in Burma, and restore the glories of Pegu. Prome and Taungu were annexed to Pegu, and eventually Ava, where the last of the royal race of Pagān ruled feebly as king, was taken by storm and destroyed.

[1] Sir Arthur Phayre.

At this juncture there arose the greatest figure in modern Burmese history, Alompra, the restorer of the Burmese supremacy, and the founder of a dynasty which, perpetuating itself for a hundred and twenty-five years, was extinguished at Mandalay in the person of King Thibaw in the closing days of the year 1885.



COLOSSUS OF THE DYING BUDDHA AT PEGU

The career of Alompra, full as it is of interest, cannot be related here. It must suffice to say that by May 1757, that very year in which the first stone of British dominion in India was laid by the genius of Clive, the fate of Pegu was already sealed. Its King was shut up within the city, the hosts of Alompra were encamped about its walls, and all hope of succour from without was at an end. Once more the devoted city

lay at the mercy of a conqueror. Famine and death had already made havoc within its walls. Slaughter and destruction swept in with the conquering armies. The King was taken prisoner, the leading men were slain, the city was given up to plunder, and the people, men, women and children, were sold into captivity.

The cup of the sorrows of Pegu was full.

It was visited in the year 1795 by Captain Michael Symes, Envoy to the Court of Ava from the Viceroy of India. Its population then did not exceed six or seven thousand, and these men were new comers. "Those," he says, "who dwelt in Pegu during its former days of splendour are now nearly extinct, and their descendants and relatives are scattered over the provinces of Tongho, Martaban, and Tallowmeon; many also live under the protection of the Siamese."

Pegu had in fact been completely annihilated.

Singular testimony to this was offered a few years since, when there was discovered buried in the jungle a comparatively modern Colossus of Buddha one hundred and eighty-one feet in length, of which the present inhabitants could give no shred of information.

CHAPTER III

MERGUI

THERE are still many who think that the pearlers of the 'nineties made Mergui, and that before their coming it had no history; and of the remote and sleepy little settlement of to-day it is indeed difficult to believe any tale of bygone greatness. For it lies here on the fringe of the ocean, as if all but repose had passed it by. Behind and about it there spreads a wild country of swamps and mountains clothed in dense and luxuriant vegetation, the home of the rhinoceros, the elephant, and the tiger. No telegraph wire has ever hummed in its vicinity, and a small steamer that passes by it, dropping anchor for a few hours each week in its secluded harbour, is almost the only link that binds it to the outer world.

Yet Mergui has come very near to greatness. It has harboured ambassadors and kings, it has stood upon a highway of the world, and its name was known in Europe before the modern capitals of India had come into being. Nearly five centuries have passed since it was visited by a traveller from St. Mark's, and more than two hundred years ago, when James II. was King,

it was governed by an Englishman. The secret of its past, and its promise for the future, lie in this, that in all the long stretch of country between Martaban and the Straits it is the only sea-port of any consequence, and it stands on the shortest route between India and Siam. So that whether the early traveller came from India and the west on his way to Siam, or up from Malacca on his way to Martaban and Pegu, he found it well to call at Mergui. Behind it lay the walled city of Tenasserim, so intimately associated with Mergui that it is not easy to distinguish between them in the narratives of the old travellers. The country that lies between has been happily described by the enthusiastic Mason :

"Forty miles through a labyrinth of thickly wooded islets, that seem fresh from the womb of uncultivated Nature, the voyager comes suddenly at the head of the delta to a crescent of precipitous mountains skirted by the river at its base, and on the crest of a low ridge of hills on the opposite shore which lies across the bend like an arrow on the bow, are seen the dilapidated battlements of the old city of Tenasserim. Though now an inconsiderable village, Tenasserim," he adds with imperial fervour, "will be an important place again when we annex Siam."

For the first mention of Mergui under the name of Tenasserim, we are indebted to the conscience of Nicolo di Conti, a Venetian. This remarkable traveller, who visited Mergui, and crossed the Aracan mountains to Ava, *half a century before Vasco da Gama discovered the Cape of Good Hope*, spent twenty-five years in travel-

ling in the East. In the course of his adventures he apostatised to save his life and the lives of his wife and children. This circumstance, when he was at length safely arrived in his native land, weighed upon his mind, and he put the matter before the Pope at Florence with the hope of getting absolution. The penance enjoined by His Holiness was that he should faithfully relate his travels to his Secretary, Poggius. Poggius being himself very desirous of his conversation, "questioned him diligently both at meetings of learned men and at his own house," and found that the traveller discoursed learnedly and gravely of all he had seen. And if there be any doubt in any one's mind as to the virtue of letting a man tell his own story in his own words, let him read the abstract by Poggius. For all that the learned Poggius was able to extract from the traveller, about Mergui, was that having sailed from Sumatra he arrived after a stormy passage of sixteen days at the city of Tenassari, "which is situated on the mouth of a river of the same name."

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there are constant references to Tenasserim. It was known to Vasco da Gama and Amerigo Vespucci, its fame was carried to the ears of Venetian spies in Lisbon, its ships were known as far as Ormuz and Guardafui, and a cousin of Magellan in the dawn of the sixteenth century describes "its colony of Moors and Gentiles, its trade with Malacca and Bengal, its traffic in copper, quicksilver, vermilion, and silk; in rose-water brought from Mekkah in little bottles of tinned copper; in opium, musk, benzoin, and benjuy." Half a century later,

Cæsar Frederick, the Venetian, passed by it. "The citie of Tenassiry," he says, "of right belongeth to the Kingdome of Sion, which is scituate on a great river side which commeth out of the Kingdome of Sion; and where this river runneth into the sea, there is a village called Mergy, in whose harbour eurie yere there ladeth some shippes with Verzina, Nypa and Beniamin, a few cloues, nuts and maces, which come from the coast of Sion, but the greatest merchandise there, is Versing and nypa which is an excellent wine, which is had in the flower of a tree called *Nype*. Whose liquor they distill and so make an excellent drinke cleere as christall, good to the mouth, and better to the stomacke, and it hath an excellent virtue," for particulars of which the discreet reader is referred to the original.

The Dutchman Linschöten, who resided at Goa from 1583 to 1588, observes that "the Portingalles have great traffic unto this towne of Tenassarien, and thither cometh great merchandise out of Pegu and Sian, for it is like a staple."

John Davis, explorer of the Arctic, passed by these coasts. "Wee shaped our course," he says, "for the citie of Tenasserim, for it is a place of great trade"; and by this time (1600) indeed Tenasserim and Mergui were well known in England and Europe. Whether as entrepots of trade or as places of interest to ambassadors, priests, and travellers bound from India to Siam, their reputation was already established. Nearly a hundred years had by now elapsed since the overland route to Siam from India had for the first time been traversed by Duarte Fernandez, the Ambassador of

Albuquerque to the King of Siam. On his return from the capital in the year 1511 he with his following "passed overland towards the West into the citie of Tanacarim, standing upon the sea on the other side in twelve degrees, where they embarked themselves in two ships, and sailed along the coast unto the citie of Malacca"; and Antonio de Miranda de Azavedo, his successor, also sent by Albuquerque, reported that it was only a ten days' journey across the peninsula.

In 1606 Balthazar de Sequeira, the first missionary who took this route, having sailed from St. Thomas for Tenasserim, crossed the peninsula to Siam, "partly by goodly Rivers, partly over cragged and rough Hills and Forests stored with Rhinocerots, Elephants, and Tigers (one of which tare in pieces one of the company before our eyes)."

This stream of trade and travel grew each year, and the wild border road over the Samroiyot, or Country of Three Hundred Peaks, was constantly traversed by embassies and priests.

In 1662, the first French missionaries to Siam entered by Mergui and Tenasserim, under the leadership of Monseigneur de la Mothe Lambert, Bishop of Berythe, and there is happily on record the narrative of their travels. A great portion of it is taken up with details of the long journey these devoted travellers made from Paris to Bussora and Ispahan, and from there across the continent of India to Masulipatam, with which we are not here immediately concerned. But the little book is worthy of complete perusal, for its piety, its candour, its humanity, and the glimpse it offers into

the ways of "Messieurs les Anglois" of the "Compagnie d'Angleterre," living and trading in the East. It was written on the eve of the formation of the New French East India Company, at a time when the ambition of Louis XIV. was projecting a splendid Embassy to Siam, and it was read with interest at the Court of the Grande Monarque.

"We left Masulipatam," says the writer, "on the 26th of March in a Moorish ship, and on the 28th of April we cast anchor in the harbour of Mergui, fifteen leagues distant from Tenasserim." Here he had to obtain passports for Siam and to undergo the formalities of the Custom House. "Il n'est pas difficile," observes our author naïvely, "à ceux qui voyagent de cacher les petites curiositez que l'on apporte d'Europe." At Tenasserim they lodged at the house of the resident Portuguese priest, and the Bishop was invited to confirm a number of the Christian community. The party visited a Phôngyi, who listened with grave courtesy to their disquisitions on the beauty of the Christian faith. He was, it would seem, no match for them in dialectics, for they found the poor man full of darkness, contradictions, and absurdities; but he was courteous enough to say that he believed their religion to be a good one, and that indeed the good opinion that was held in his country of Christianity, was the cause of the great toleration that was extended to those who professed it. "In effect," adds the Bishop, "this toleration could not well be greater, for here in this pagan land one hears the church bells chime, one sees the churches with their open doors, and within, there rises up the

chant of the divine office, the voice of the preacher, unmolested in his vocation."

On the 30th of June, 1662, the episcopal party began their journey to the capital, in three boats of the country fashioned just as they are to-day. In these boats they slept and ate and passed the days and nights of their journey, for it was too perilous to venture on shore because of the dense forests, full of tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, bison and other savage beasts.

The peculiar difficulties of their navigation (of which the description is literally applicable to a voyage up the Yunzalín to-day[1]) resulted in the Bishop's boat being wrecked on a snag.

"Monseigneur de Beryte, avec son Ecclesiastique, demeura assez de temps suspendu sur le trône de cet arbre, battu de tous costez des flots impetueux de cette rivière."

From Jalinga, where they rented a mat house and rested a few days to repair their damages, they proceeded by bullock carts, whose discomfort left a lively impression on their minds. At night, to protect themselves against the attacks of wild beasts they had to make lägers of their carts surrounded by a stockade of thorns, to keep out "des rhinocerots, et surtout de cruels tygres, qui livrent une furieuse guerre aux bœufs." During the night they fired their arquebuses and lighted bonfires to the same end, each man of the party taking it in turn to do sentinel.

They paid their toll also, like all who have come

[1] Vide *The Silken East.*

after them, to "certaines petites mouches fort piquantes," of whom the Bishop plaintively adds, "le nombre est infiny"; and so they came at last to the end of their wonderful journey.

The perils and discomforts of the way gradually diminished as time went on and the difficult road over the mountains was more and more traversed by persons of consequence. The English who lived at Mergui frequently took this way to Siam, and letters from India to the Company's agents at the Siamese capital were habitually sent by way of Tenasserim. In 1666 a party of Englishmen who arrived at Mergui in "a vessayle of Sr Edward Winters" made the journey overland, with goods, to the Siamese capital. They appear to have been ill-used by the Governor, for they were detained by him two months "till the time of the Rains, pretending Kings goods must goe first, and by reason of this, and lying not above a foot from the moyst ground, gave all of us such feavers and fluxes, being eight of us in company, did not thinke half of us should live to Syam."

So much indeed was the route used at this time that we learn of Sir Edward Winter sending an emissary to the capital to arrest a Mr. Melthrop, against whom he had a grievance, "with the help of some Portugalles his confederates, and accordingly they did seize upon him at Syam and in an inhuman manner haled him through ye woode to Temassare, and there imbarked him, laden with irons into a Junke bound from thence to St. Thomas."

In 1683 Richard Burneby, a dismissed employé of

the East India Company, was appointed Governor of Mergui by the Siamese Government, guided at that time by the genius of Phaulkon, the celebrated adventurer, who rose in an incredibly short time from the place of cabin-boy to that of First Minister of the King of Siam, and almost to the throne itself. Samuel White, an Interloper—one of those, that is, who rightly disputed the Company's monopoly of the Eastern trade—was at the same time appointed Shahbunder, an office which gave him entire control of the customs, the shipping, and the trade of the port.

We know something of these two Englishmen, and we can picture them newly appointed to offices of rank, making their way overland from Siam in each other's company; full of hope at the favourable turn in their fortunes, and of good fellowship, since they had now known each other for nearly four years, and were Englishmen alone in a far country. But there was a radical difference in the characters of these two pioneers, prototypes of many who were to follow them, which made any continuity of good fellowship between them impossible. Between Burneby, the ease-loving, indolent man of harems, and the keen, virile, and ambitious White there was little in common; and as the days went by at Mergui they drifted further apart till at last White came to speak of him as a man "fit to converse with nobody but his Crim Catwall, and take delight in being the Town Pimp, and disposing of all the whores to anybody that wants one, or keeps company with a parcel of Sailors, that over a bowl of punch will lye worshipping him up, till he thinks himself a

Petty Prince among them, and in the meantime never minds the main chance, nay he's so soft a fellow as to let his own Servants cheat him to his face, and run away with the perquisites of his Office; for I myself have offered him fifty Cattees a year, for that he never made five cattees of, since he came to the place, and to tell him a secret is the same thing as to publish it about the Town with a Drum, or Take a woman into councill."

In 1685 war broke out between Siam and Golconda, a maritime war waged for the most part by English captains under the direction of Samuel White. Englishmen now swarmed in Mergui, and excitement ran high as prize after prize came in under the shadow of Pataw. While Burneby caroused, White ruled with a strong hand; he fined, imprisoned, and confiscated, and daily added to his growing fortune. The Interloper had found an outlet for his genius.

But greater events than those at Mergui were now afoot, and Samuel White was not destined to enjoy much longer the tenure of his office. The East India Company, exasperated by the failure of its factories in Siam, by the irritation of the war with Golconda, and most of all by the spectacle of "interloping" Englishmen protected and favoured by a hostile Government, resolved on war with Siam. The end was not long in coming.

On the 24th of June, 1687, Captain Weltden, in command of the British frigate *Curtana*, anchored in Mergui harbour. He came equipped with instructions to clear the port of Siamese men-of-war and to

recall all the Englishmen in the service of the King of Siam. One of the letters he brought was addressed to "Mr. John Richard Burneby, Governor, and Mr. Samuel White, Shahband at Mergui for the King of Siam," and it informed them that in the case of failure on their part to take "the first opportunity to leave the King of Syam's service and repair thither to Fort St. George, they would be prosecuted in his Majesties courts of Judicature as Interlopers and Rebellious persons staying and trading in India contrary to his sd: Maties Royall proclamation." The ceremony of reading the King's Proclamation took place in Mr. White's drawing-room, and when it was finished the English residents of Mergui unanimously expressed their willingness to obey it, and evinced their loyalty by crying aloud "Amen" after Mr. Forwell had repeated the words "God Save the King!"

A truce of sixty days was established, pending the receipt of a reply from the King of Siam to a copy of the Proclamation sent to him by special messenger. But short of extreme complacency on the part of the Siamese authorities, or of rigid abstention on the part of the British commander, no such truce could have been maintained. The Siamese began to stake the river and mount batteries of heavy guns. The British commander retorted by pulling up the stakes and declaring that he would spike the guns, and on the 9th of July he went on board the Siamese vessel the *Resolution*, armed with a pair of pistols, and seized her in the name of the King of England to the use of the Honourable Company. This breach of faith

roused the native population, and on the night of the 14th July, 1687, as Captain Weltden was returning to his ship from a dinner at White's house, they fell upon him, and massacred every Englishman they could lay hands on in the town. White and Weltden both escaped, but the dead bodies of Englishmen "driving by the ships side miserably mangled," damped the courage of the survivors, and the 18th of July found the *Curtana* and the *Resolution* in full retreat before the Siamese fleet.

In this massacre fell Richard Burneby, and one hundred and thirteen years were destined to elapse before Mergui was again to be governed by an Englishman.

For a brief season the French replaced the English at Mergui. A French officer was appointed Governor, and in March 1688 a detachment of a body of French troops sent out by Louis XIV. at the request of the King of Siam marched overland to garrison the town. But the Siamese were now tired of foreigners. A revolution at the capital which broke out shortly after their arrival resulted in the death of Phaulkon and the election of a Pretender to the throne. Under instructions from the new monarch the French garrison at Mergui was attacked. A gallant defence was made, but the failure of water compelled the garrison to retreat to their ships. The capital of Siam, in which French influence had for some years been supreme, was simultaneously evacuated, and a Minute from Fort St. George dated the 1st of February, 1689, records that "the French forces and interests is totally extirpated that country,

none of them remaining except some few priests, who are condemned to miserable cabins and slavery."

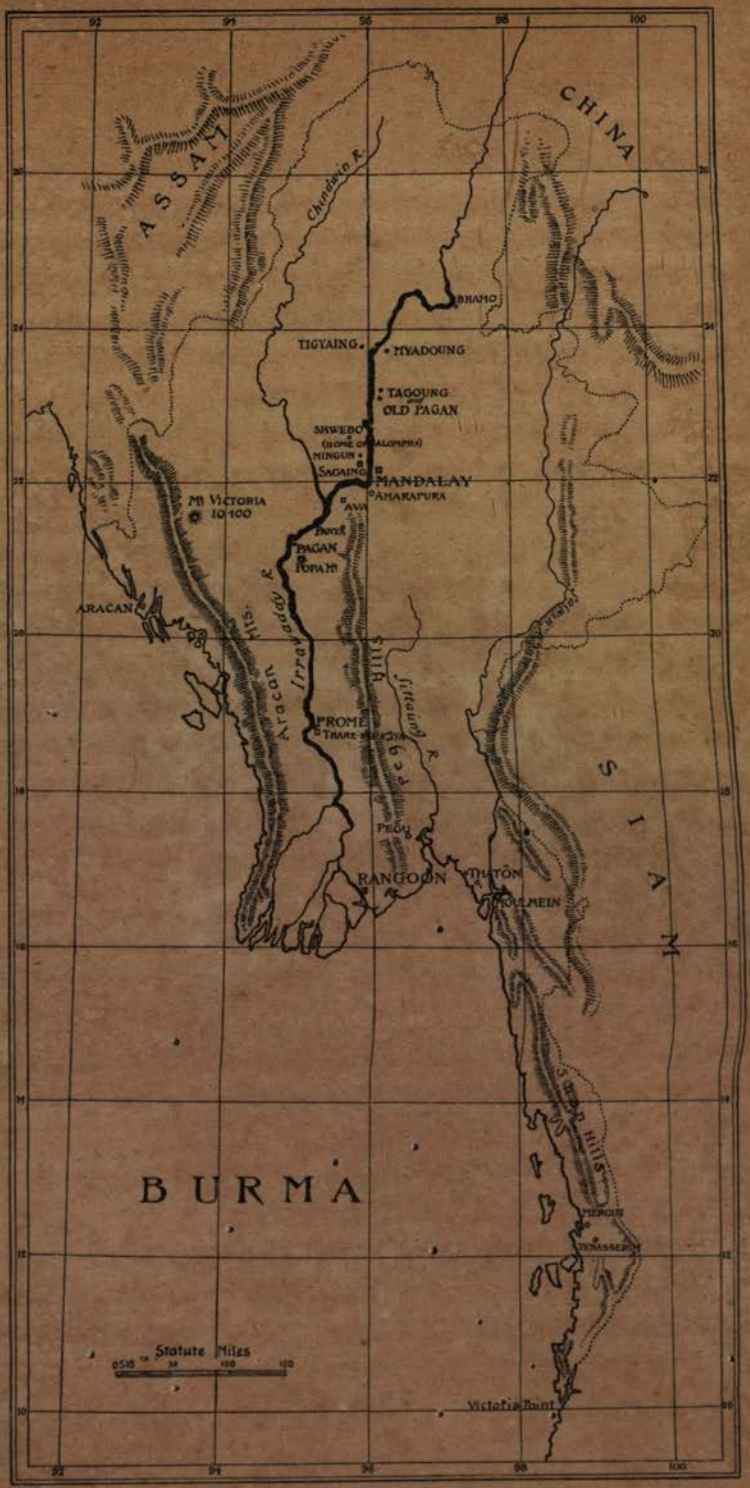
As time went on, Mergui was again visited by French and English ships; but the two massacres and the general sense of European failure in Siam had extinguished its prosperity. Revolution followed revolution at the capital and the fortunes of Mergui continued to dwindle until they were all but annihilated by the invading hordes of Alompra, two years after the battle of Plassey. Mergui, which had roused the strong personal interest of James II., and nearly become a capital of the English people in the Far East, sank once more into a Lydian obscurity, till the thunder of English guns in October, 1824, reclaimed it to British ascendency, but not again to greatness. For it was far better known in the days of Phaulkon and Samuel White, two hundred and twenty years ago, than it is to-day.

NOTE.—An English tombstone, the cherished possession of a washerman, was recently discovered at Mergui, inscribed with the following legend:

. . . RELYETH IN . . .
. . . BODY OF M . . .
. . . SAM WH . . .
. . . THIS LIF . . .
DONI 168 . . .
tor meus vivit ergores . . .

It has been deciphered by Mr. Grant-Brown, the Deputy Commissioner, as follows: "Here lyeth in peace the body of Master Saml White who departed this life Anno Domini 1687. Redemptor Meus vivit ergo Resurgam." Samuel White, however, lived to pursue his campaign against the East India Company several years later in London; and this tombstone therefore either does not relate to him, or else it was erected under a misapprehension.

BELL-BEARERS FROM MANIPUR



SKETCH MAP OF BURMA

POSTSCRIPT

I

THIS book will greatly fail of its purpose if it does not encourage the reader's interest in the monuments of Burma —many, alas! now hastening to decay—and in the noble work of conserving and interpreting the best of them, which, inspired by Lord Curzon, has since his time been carried on in a systematic and scientific manner. Many buildings that might, even by now, have utterly perished, have under his influence been given a new lease of life; many more which hold the buried past of the Burmese people are being made to yield up their secrets to skilful research. The traveller in Burma, to whom such things are of any account, should not fail to equip himself with the annual publications of the Archæological Department, copies of which are purchasable in London soon after publication. Here I am allowed the privilege of printing, with Lord Curzon's permission, his Minute on the preservation of the Royal buildings at Mandalay, a copy of which he has kindly lent me. It tells, in a few pregnant and authoritative words, the whole story of what has been done to preserve these beautiful and pathetic buildings since he visited them as Viceroy of India in 1901.

MINUTE BY THE VICEROY ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE PALACE AT MANDALAY

The desirability of preserving King Mindon's Palace arises not from its historical importance, which cannot be said to be very great, nor from its antiquity—for it is less than half a century old—but from its value as a model—the only one that will before long survive—of the civil and ceremonial architecture of the Burman Kings. Of the many scores of

Kyaungs in Mandalay, some of which are specimens of the same style, there is none that is not in a state of dilapidation ; and the majority will, in all probability, have disappeared within the next forty or fifty years. The Palace, however, is still intact ; it is in a reasonable state of repair ; as a royal residence it is on a scale of size and splendour superior to that of any other structure in the province ; with its surroundings it constitutes a unit (in spite of the destruction of many of the former buildings on the platform) capable of independent preservation. Moreover, its survival and maintenance are both a compliment to the sentiments of the Burman race, showing them that we have no desire to obliterate the relics of their past sovereignty, and a reminder that it has now passed for ever into our hands. I attach no value to the plea that the Burmans will be led by the preservation of the Palace to think that there is a chance that the monarchy will one day be restored. Any such fanciful notion, even if it exists, cannot long survive. No one believes for a moment, because we preserve and are restoring the palaces of the Moguls at Agra, that we contemplate placing that dynasty again on the throne.

If, however, the Palace at Mandalay is to be preserved, certain definite principles must be recognised as to its treatment and custody. An arbitrary line cannot be drawn, as was attempted by Lord Elgin, round a certain parallelogram of buildings, which should be kept up, while everything else on the platform is to be allowed to decay. The dividing line must be one that is determined by the character, condition, and artistic merit of the buildings to be preserved, not by their accidental juxtaposition.

Secondly, inasmuch as the entire group of buildings is of wood, and as the one great danger which has to be feared is fire, it is useless to evacuate one block, while continuing to occupy another. Every occupied house on the platform, and every individual living inside it, and using a lamp or a candle or a fire, is a source of perpetual danger to the whole. This applies more particularly to wooden structures, and most of all to the Queen's Palace and Audience Hall, now occupied by the Upper Burma Club, and surrounded by a cluster of wooden houses and cottages, tenanted by servants or let out as apartments. As long as this occupancy continues, the entire Palace is in daily, almost in hourly, danger ; and it is futile to issue orders, and to expend Government money upon the preservation of the whole, while leaving a perpetual fire-trap in one corner or part. No consideration of comfort or convenience should be allowed to interfere with this elementary fact.

The third principle to be observed relates to the character and methods of future repair or renovation. Financial considerations render it im-

possible to preserve the whole of the Palace buildings in their original state, even if on other grounds it were desirable, which it is not. I do not know in what condition were the pillars of King Thibaw's Throne-room and Audience Hall (now used as the Garrison Church) before they were re-gilt. But supposing them to have been much the same as the gilded pillars and walls in other parts of the Palace, I should not myself have sanctioned their being re-gilt. I should have regarded it as a needless expenditure of money, both because the re-gilt columns are not more, but less, beautiful than the old, and because, owing to the impossibility of carrying the work right through the building, a sharp and unnecessary contrast is set up between the restored and the unrestored portions. However, this mistake, if mistake it was, cannot now be remedied. In future, however, I think that the following principles should be observed :—

(*a*) *Regilding should not be resorted to except in cases of obvious necessity.*

(*b*) *An annual sum should be spent upon conservation, and should be devoted to the general repair of the scheduled buildings on the platform, to the occasional cleaning of the walls, to the restoration or renewal of the carved woodwork (which ought not as a general rule to be painted in an endeavour to imitate the sombre crimsons or reds of the old) in cornices, and eaves, and gables, and spires.*

If these principles are followed, the platform and its buildings should (barring the accident of fire) be capable of preservation for at least a hundred years. The columns will lose their brilliancy, as the gilding becomes dulled or wears off, and the entire fabric will look less splendid and less picturesque. But its original character will still be maintained and it will continue to survive as a type of regal architecture and residence in the pre-British times. It will be for some successor of mine to decide whether, as the structure grows older and gradually moulders into decay, it will be worth while attempting renovation on a larger scale than I have here foreshadowed.

Acting upon the above principles, in my recent thorough examination of the Palace Platform, I issued the following instructions to Mr. Benton, the Engineer, which it seems desirable to place on record, so as to guide future proceedings :—

(1) *Mr. Benton has undertaken to prepare a ground-plan of the platform, with its buildings, in which all those that are to be evacuated (where now occupied) and to be especially preserved from decay, because of their character or associations, are to be marked.*

(2) *Buildings not so scheduled will be preserved or not, according as it may be thought desirable. A good many of them—the white elephant stable may be given as an illustration—will, in all probability, one day tumble down.*

(3) *The church has already received notice to quit, and will be finally removed as soon as the new church is completed. This should be in the early part of* 1903 *at the latest.*

(4) *The Club should be given notice to leave at the same time. There has, I believe, been some talk of a lease that was alleged to have been given to the Club for a term of years. But no evidence of such an arrangement exists: nor would it have been in the power of a Local Government to dispose of a Public Building in such a fashion without superior sanction. The main reason for the removal of the Club is, as has already been pointed out, the danger of fire. Moreover, its continued presence in one of the principal Palace buildings, though I believe fraught with little or no damage to the latter, which seems to have been treated with praiseworthy care, conflicts with the principle upon which the whole is to be preserved as a national monument. There will be less need for so large a club building for Europeans in the future, owing to the reduction of the garrison of Fort Dufferin; and it will be for the Local Government and the members of the Club to decide where they can be accommodated. In all probability a site should be selected adjacent to the lawn-tennis courts and gardens. I see no objection to their being given the summer-house in which King Thibaw surrendered to General Prendergast, and which is unworthy of being preserved on its own account. I understand that it was originally occupied as a club. If it be too small or too dilapidated, the site, or some adjoining piece of ground, might be given to the Club upon which to build.*

(5) *The whitewash that was smeared over several of the scheduled rooms in the Palace, during its occupation as a residence or as offices by the British, is to be removed. If the original crimson lacquer below has perished, the surface must be repainted the same colour.*

(6) *The whitewash originally applied in King Thibaw's time to two or three interior rooms, because of their darkness, can be left untouched, the apartments in question being of no beauty or importance.*

(7) *The crimson throne, upon which stood the small gold images, should be replaced behind the throne-door where it stood in King Thibaw's time.*

(8) *The lions that stood on either side of King Thibaw's principal or Lion throne should be recovered, re-gilt, and replaced. It is not necessary to replace the small lions in the niches in the base of the throne.*

(9) *Some panels, with glass incrustations, that have been moved from their original site in the interior apartments, should be replaced. The same applies to the panels in the dining-room of the Club. When the latter quits, they should be restored. This must not be forgotten.*

(10) *All traces of the recent occupation of the rooms in the Palace, either as an official residence or as Government offices, should be removed. A good many of these still survive.*

(11) *The water tanks, where placed near to the platform, should be removed to a safe distance. If the main buildings were ablaze, they would, as placed at present, be unapproachable and useless.*

(12) *When the entire range of buildings has been evacuated, the platform, the scheduled apartments, and the gardens should be maintained as a national monument, open to the public from end to end, and carefully guarded, night and day, by a sufficient body of watchmen.*

(13) *A good deal of the apparent dustiness and dilapidation arises from no attempt having been made, since the British occupation, to clear away the dirt and cobwebs which lie thick everywhere, and which are the inevitable consequence of exposure to the air. A little careful dusting and cleaning (not rubbing) will show that in many cases the gilding is almost as fresh as when first put on. I have suggested that this should be done.*

(14) *The Council Chamber of the* Hlutdaw *is so dilapidated as to be unworthy of preservation among the scheduled buildings. It stands at some distance from the main structure of the Palace, and possesses little merit or beauty. I have asked Mr. Benton to furnish me with drawings and measurements of the old throne, side-doors, and balustrades that still remain in it, with a view of presenting them to the Calcutta Museum. They will otherwise perish in a few years. If it is necessary to keep the offices of the Commissariat Department in the Palace enclosure, I see no great objection to their being accommodated in the* Hlutdaw. *They must certainly be removed from their present quarters, which are in the scheduled list.*

(15) *The outside walls and platform were in the time of the Kings painted white. The grey that has since been introduced is one of the hideous innovations of the Public Works Department. It should be replaced, either by plain whitewash, or, should some contrast be required, by white and crimson-red (corresponding to the colour everywhere used by the Burma Kings).*

CURZON.

DECEMBER 2, 1901.

NOTE BY THE VICEROY ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS (OTHER THAN THE PALACE) IN MANDALAY

(1) *It should be considered a duty of Government to preserve the fanciful tiered wooden pavilions over the gateways of the old City Wall. Some of these are dilapidated and crumbling. Others have, as far as I could judge, already disappeared, certain of the gateways being uncovered by any erection. If I am correct, these should be restored. As long as the City Wall survives, an endeavour should be made to preserve its original character and picturesqueness, in which the wooden structures in question play a prominent part. They should be inspected every year; and the timely expenditure of a little money will keep them intact for a long time to come.*

(2) *The gateways, the curtains masking them, and the bridges across the moat, were, in the days of the Burman monarchy, painted white. They have now been disfigured by Public Works Department grey. Either the white should be restored, or, if this is thought too glaring, the parts now painted grey should be coloured with a crimson or brick tint similar to that of the walls.*

(3) *It might be worth while to give a little money to the repair of the Queen's Monastery, upon the lines indicated in my Minute upon the Palace. If re-gilding is required, the Buddhist Community should do it themselves. But structural repair and the renovation of broken or rotting woodwork might be undertaken on a modest scale, and with some advantage, since the group of buildings is, next to the Palace, the most picturesque in Mandalay.*

DECEMBER 2, 1901.

II

The following extracts are taken from the Report of the Superintendent, Archæological Survey, Burma, for the year ending 31st March, 1907, a copy of which has reached me just as this volume is going finally to press:—

"UNFRUITFUL RESULTS OF EXCAVATIONS IN BURMA

"The exploration of ancient sites and the excavation of old pagodas in Burma have not been, so far, fruitful of interesting results, because of the authorised vandalism committed under the native régime. As the Burmans broke down the temples of

the Talaings in the eleventh and eighteenth centuries A.D., so the latter destroyed a large number of the pagodas at Pagan in 1404 and 1751 A.D., during the devastating wars between Pegu and Ava. The greatest amount of destruction was, however, committed when the Mongols under Kublai Khan invaded Pagan in 1284 A.D. The *Mahâyâzawin* or Chronicles of the Burmese Kings plaintively record that 14,000 shrines of various dimensions and styles of architecture were destroyed by the King to obtain material for building a series of fortifications, which extended twenty-one miles along the left bank of the Irrawaddy. In peaceful times, too, the Burmese pagodas were often dug into for their valuable contents. In the language of Thohanbwa, the Shan Chief of Mohnyin, who became King of Ava in 1526 A.D., 'the pagodas are the spiritual and material banks of the Burmans, and should be despoiled of their treasures.' In these circumstances, the work of excavating in this Province is as dispiriting as the gleaning of grain after repeated harvests have been garnered in.

"ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BURMESE ALPHABET

"Prior to the eleventh century A.D., the lapidary art appears to have been unknown at Pagan, for no stone inscriptions antedating the rise of Anawrata have been found. This has created a belief among writers on Burma that, before the conquest of Thatôn by Anawrata, the Burmese did not possess an alphabet, and much less a literature. Such a belief has, however, been refuted by the researches recently made into the origin and development of the Burmese alphabet, and the broad facts elicited may be summarised as follows:

"*Third century A.D.*—Burma was conquered by the Kingdom of Shu, one of the Three Kingdoms into which China was then divided; and she became tributary to China.

"*Fourth century A.D.*—The *Mahâyânist* form of Buddhism was introduced into Burma by Chinese missionaries, who taught it in Chinese. No Chinese epigraphic remains have, so far, been discovered, with the single exception of the Chinese inscription set up by the Mongols at Pagan in the thirteenth century A.D.

"*Fifth to sixth centuries* A.D.—The Chinese of the South were engaged in an incessant struggle with the Tartars of the North, and Chinese control and influence became considerably weakened, and Burma escaped from the thraldom of Chinese hieroglyphs and ideographs. The Indian form of *Mahâyânism* was introduced by Indian missionaries from Northern and Eastern India, who taught it in Sanskrit, using the alphabet of the Gupta period.

"*Seventh to eighth centuries* A.D.—In 622 A.D., under the auspices of King Srongtsan Gampo, the Tibetan alphabet was invented on the basis of the Lañcâ letters, a variety of the Gupta character, and an active religious propaganda was pursued. In the eighth century, Nanchao, the Shan Kingdom of Talifu, annexed Burma, and became a medium of communication between Tibet and Burma, and Tibetan religious influences penetrated into Pagan.

"The Bön religion or Shamanism, and, later on, Lamaism or *Mâhâyanism* with a peculiar hierarchy superadded, were introduced into Burma from Tibet. The Tibetan Bön priests or 'Bön-gyepa' were the precursors of the Burmese *pôngyi* of the present day. The new systems of faith were engrafted on the prevailing Indian form of *Mahâyânism*. The Tibetan priests left no appreciable impression on the language and literature of Burma; but the Burmese alphabet, judging from the arrangement of the letters, and the sounds accorded to them, appears to be a blending of the Tibetan and Sanskrit systems.

"*Ninth to tenth centuries* A.D.—Tantrism was introduced from Bengal through Assam and Manipur, and, possibly, also through Arakan. Its priests, called 'Aris,' favoured Naga-worship, and the *Jus primae noctis* prevailed amongst them. They continued to use the Gupta alphabet, as well as the characters of the Pala dynasty of Bengal (800 to 1050 A.D.). Two gold plates have been found at Prome, which are inscribed in the Eastern Chalukyan character, a Dravidian script of this period.

"*Eleventh century* A.D.—*Hînayânism* or Buddhism of the Southern School, whose vehicle is Pali, was introduced into Pagan after Anawrata's conquest of Thatôn in 1057 A.D. Copies of the Tripitaka, in that language, were obtained from Thatôn and Ceylon.

"*Twelfth century* A.D.—Jain, Saiva, and Vaishnava influences completely disappeared at Pagan, as evidenced by the Kyaukku Temple, which was built in 1188 A.D. An outburst of architectural energy took place, which lasted from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries A.D. Pure *Hînayânism* as well as Burmese epigraphy became firmly established.

"*Thirteenth century* A.D.—The Mongols under Kublai Khan overran Burma in 1284 A.D. The Burmese Empire broke up, and the Shans and Talaings asserted their independence. These political upheavals produced no modification in the Burmese alphabet, which had been fully developed and had assumed a permanent form.

"The conclusion is inevitable that the Burmese alphabet was primarily based on the Gupta script of the fifth century A.D., which was imported overland through Assam and Manipur, and, possibly, also through Arakan, and that it was modified, to some extent, by the Eastern Chalukyan character of the tenth century A.D., which reached Pagan by sea through the Talaings. Pagan latterly received her letters and religion from Aryan or Northern India, while Pegu received hers from the Dravidians of the South. It was in the eleventh century A.D., after the conquest of Thatôn by Anawrata, that the Aryan and Dravidian systems were harmoniously blended at Pagan, and that thence-forward Burmese civilisation assumed a definite aspect.

"BRIEF NOTE ON BURMESE ARCHÆOLOGY,

"*Compiled for Mr. Scott O'Connor, Author of* 'The Silken East.'

"The following brief Note on Burmese Archæology was compiled for Mr. Scott O'Connor, author of *The Silken East*, and was submitted to the Director-General of Archæology:—

"'The archæological buildings of Burma form a distinct group by themselves. Mostly constructed of wood or of brick and mortar, they bear strange marks of hybridisation, and the problem for solution appears to be to establish a relationship between their architecture and that of analogous structures in the adjacent countries of Tibet, China, Cambodia, Java, Ceylon, the Dekkhan, and Northern India. There can be no doubt that

an active missionary propaganda was pursued in Burma by the powerful Buddhist dynasties of India and China, and that whenever there was religious persecution elsewhere, Burma afforded a safe asylum to all religionists, whether they were Buddhists, Jains, or Hindus. Burmese architecture being mainly the expression of the religious sense, these refugees from different countries holding different ideals would contribute towards its development.

"'Up to the present time, attention has been chiefly devoted to the conservation of the Palace buildings at Mandalay and to the notable Pagodas of Pagan, of which it has been decided to maintain thirty at the public expense. The former are built of wood, which lends itself to the quaint artistic genius of the Burmese people. The tall pyramidal spires, the multiple roofs, the flamboyant ornaments, the brilliant mosaic work, and above all, the rich gilding, which flashes gorgeously in the sunlight, have been handed down for long generations; and for all we know, these might have formed the chief features of the Palaces of Asoka and his successors, of which we have but a faint glimpse from the records of the early Greek writers.

"'All conceivable forms of Burmese architecture are found at Pagan. The architectural energy of the Burmese Kings lasted for about a thousand years, that is, from the third to the thirteenth century A.D., and was most active from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, owing to the impulse given to it by Anawrata, after his conquest of the Talaing Kingdom of Thatôn. The oldest of the shrines appears to be the Ngakywènadaung, a tuber-shaped pagoda of no pretentious dimensions, built of green enamelled bricks, and crowned with what looks like a small domed chapel, thereby bespeaking its Chinese origin. The Singhalese influence is reflected in the Sapada Pagoda, which was built, in the twelfth century A.D., by Sapada, a native of Bassein, who was ordained a Buddhist monk in Ceylon, and who founded a sect at Pagan. Architects from the Dekkhan were evidently employed in the construction of the temples erected in the eleventh century A.D. by Manuha, the captive King of the Talaings, and Kyanzittha, the reputed son of Anawrata.

The pose and contour of the images of Buddha and of the figures sculptured on stone are distinctly South-Indian, and the structures, like the Nagayôn and the Ananda, are square edifices with *Mandapas* or porches, and are provided with vaulted chambers and corridor passages, into which a subdued light gleams from above. The most interesting class of buildings, which would repay a careful study, is, however, that to which the Shwesandaw and Shwezigôn belong. They are solid domes with sharp pinnacles, in which the types of the Indian *stûpa*, of the Singhalese Dagoba, and probably of other cognate structures elsewhere, are found combined. There are also cave temples, built against the precipitous sides of ravines or hollowed out of sand dunes of which the Kyaukku is the prototype. They were intended to be a combined residence and temple, and served their purpose well in the torrid climate of Pagan. At Mandalay, the restoration of some of the buildings, especially the pavilions on the walls of Fort Dufferin, has been successfully executed; but at Pagan, only conservation has been attempted.

"'The compilation of the Provincial list of monuments has not yet been completed. A selection will be made of such buildings as reflect the history and religion of the Burmese people, and steps will be taken for their preservation either by—

(i) Maintenance by the Public Works Department at Government expense;

(ii) Protection under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904;

(iii) The formation of Trusts under section 539 of the Code of Civil Procedure;

(iv) The informal appointment of Trustees by Deputy Commissioners, on the nomination of village elders, in the case of monuments which, though possessing an archæological interest, do not possess funds or landed property.

"'Since 1884, Trust Schemes have been sanctioned by the District Courts in respect of the principal Pagodas of Rangoon, Bassein, Henzada, Prome, Pegu, and Mandalay, according to circumstances. Trustees will be appointed to additional shrines.

Postscript

With a view to invest the Deputy Commissioners with control over the architecture of new buildings erected within the precincts of pagodas, proposals are under consideration for the amendment of the existing Trust Schemes.

"'In Burma, in conserving ancient monuments, the pleasing factor, which strengthens the hands of Government, has always been the hearty co-operation of the people themselves, who are ready to help on the progress of the works with advice, money or labour. The policy inaugurated by Lord Curzon in respect of the Burmese monuments has doubtless increased, more than a hundredfold, the loyalty of the people towards the British Government, which has now, in their eyes, accepted the responsibilities ever assumed by their own Kings.'"

STATEMENT SHOWING EXPENDITURE INCURRED ON ARCHÆOLOGICAL WORKS DURING 1906-07

	Rs.
Dismantling and reconstructing the spire of Mandalay Palace	64,873
Restoration of Palace buildings, Mandalay	5,382
Special repairs to Thudama *kyaung* at foot of Mandalay Hill, Mandalay	2,120
Special repairs to Shwenandaw *kyaung*	724
Special repairs to the East Audience Hall and two wing buildings of the Mandalay Palace	3,020
Special repairs to Palace buildings, Mandalay	1,224
Special repairs to Salin Monastery, Mandalay	2,845
Repairing the Summer House in the South Palace Gardens	148
Clearing the jungle around the Pagodas at Tagaung, Ruby Mines District	240
Annual repairs to Palace buildings, Mandalay	3,976
Annual repairs to Bagyidaw's and Bodawpaya's Tomb at Amarapura, and Tombs of King Mindon, Queen Nanmadawpayagyi, two Queen-mothers, and Queen Sinbyumashin at Mandalay	334
Annual repairs to *pyatthats* on walls of Fort Dufferin, Mandalay	1,997
Architectural Survey of the Palace, Fort Dufferin, Mandalay	227
Constructing a model shed and models of Mandalay Palace	6,840
Total	93,950

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